

*40-Day
Devotional
Study of the
Book of John*

NKJV Edition

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How to Use this Book:

God's Word is Awesome!

The Lord promises that if we will diligently study the Bible He will use it to increase our faith. Romans 10:17 says: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

The first thing you need to do to make this study be everything it can be for you is to **commit yourself to becoming a student of God's Word**. You're going to need to find at least 30 minutes each day to study and to prayer! Don't cop out and say you can't do that! How much time do you spend on your smartphone each day? How much time watching TV? How much time on your computer? How much time gaming? You can find 30 minutes for God!

Next you need to begin each session in prayer, asking God's Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth! Then read the passage for the day, preferably in the New King James Version of the Bible. Then follow the study guide for that day, which will guide you through this devotional book.

Then end each time in prayer also, using the things you've learned that day as a launching pad into praying for all the things going on in your life.

God bless you as you study God's Word!!!

Day 1- Read John 1:1-18

One of the neat things about most books of the Bible is that if you read them closely enough the author will tell you their purpose in writing that book. John is no exception.

Look up and write out John 20:31 here:

John was an eyewitness to all Jesus said and did when He was on earth. He probably wrote this gospel after the other three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) had been written. Sometimes the other three gospels are called the “synoptic” gospels. One definition of synoptic includes this statement: “containing parts that, when compared, are virtually identical.”

It appears that John was compelled by God the Holy Spirit to supplement the synoptic gospels with his own personal testimony about Jesus. John had probably been asked thousands of times to recount his own personal story of his time with Jesus. The gospel of John is that story.

John’s gospel does not include any of the parable stories Jesus told and only seven carefully chosen miracles of Jesus are included. The other gospels had already done a fine job recounting those things. **Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, everything in John’s gospel is about proving who Jesus is, and calling sinners to believe in Him and gain eternal life.**

These first 18 verses waste no time in establishing those truths, and do it in some of the most poetic language the world has ever seen. The words roll off the lips beautifully!

In verse 1 John refers to Jesus as the Word. The Greek word for “word” is Logos. To the Greeks, the logos was the energizing principle behind everything in the universe and inside a person. **John wants his audience to know that the principle behind the universe is in fact a Person who can be known.**

At the end of verse 1, who does John say this person called the Word is? _____

In verse 3, what does John assert about this person called the Word? Circle the answer below:

- A. He is the Creator of some things that have been made
- B. He is the Creator of all things that have been made
- C. He created nothing that has been made

It seems obvious that John is linking John 1 with Genesis 1, where it says that “In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth.” John’s gospel states that Jesus is that Creator of all things, who with God the Father existed before creation and in fact is the Creator.

We have already seen that Jesus is the Logos. Two more words beginning with the letter “L” are used to describe Jesus in verses 4-5. Write them below after the word Logos.

Jesus is the...

1. Logos 2. _____ 3. _____

In verses 6-8 we hear the first mention of John the Baptist, who was one of the first people to tell the Jewish people that Jesus was their long-awaited Messiah, or Christ. The word Messiah is the Hebrew word. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The word Christ is the Greek word for Messiah. The New Testament was written in Greek. The word Messiah, or Christ, means “Anointed One.” We’ll read more about John the Baptist as we go through John’s gospel.

Look at verse 14. What does verse 14 say that the “Word” became and did?

WOW! God became a man and lived among us! At Christmas-time we celebrate this and remember that the prophets had predicted this would happen:

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. -Isaiah 7:14

Immanuel means “God with us.” Think of it: John got to live during the days when God came to earth and lived among us!

What two words occur in both verses 14 and 17 to let us know what Jesus is all about?

We’ll see much more about these two words as we go along in John’s gospel!

John 1:12 contains the first of many promises made in John’s gospel. According to that verse, what does a person who believes in Jesus and receives Him into their life get the right to become? _____.

The word translated “right” is the Greek word *exousia*. It is one of the most important words in the gospels. Other times it is translated “authority” and “power.” When a person believes that Jesus is the Creator who came to earth and dealt decisively with their sins on the cross, and prays to receive Him as their Savior and Lord, they have the right, authority, and power to become a child of God. If you have never prayed to receive Jesus, pray this prayer now to the Lord:

“Dear God, I know that I am a sinner, and I know my sins deserve judgment. Thank you that you have not left me in that hopeless condition, but you came to earth, Jesus, and lived the perfect life I fall short of. That made you a legitimate substitute for my sins. Thank you that your love made you willing to be an atoning sacrifice for my sins. I believe you died on the cross as my sin substitute, then rose from the dead to show your power over Satan, sin, death, and Hell. I believe, and I receive you as my Savior and pledge to follow you as my Lord. In the days ahead, show me what that means. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen”.

Day 2- Read John 1:19-34

From what we learned yesterday, why did John write this gospel? (Circle correct answer)

- A. That they would believe that Jesus is the Christ
- B. That they would believe that Jesus is the Son of God
- C. That by believing they might have life in Jesus' name
- D. All of the Above

Throughout the gospel of John, John makes his case for all of the above (see John 20:31).

In today's passage we see that before Jesus began His public ministry on earth, John the Baptist was sent to proclaim to everyone to get ready because the Messiah was coming. Here's how Matthew's gospel has it:

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" -Matthew 3:1-2

Word got out about what John the Baptist was doing and Jewish people came from all over the nation to hear John speak. The people became convinced that he was a genuine prophet like the ones who had ministered in Old Testament times. With John's call to repent, many people confessed their sins and were baptized by John in the Jordan River, earning him his nickname.

It didn't take long for the religious establishment in Jerusalem to wonder who John the Baptist really was. From what we learn about them in the gospels, they were also probably irritated that John the Baptist had not sought their permission for what he was saying and doing.

When the questioners came, they asked John the Baptist about three different people he could be. Each time he said he was not that person. **From verses 20-21, who was John the Baptist NOT:**

C_____ E_____ P_____

Many Old Testament passages like this one spoke about the coming Christ (Messiah)...

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this. -Isaiah 9:6-7

The reason they asked if he was Elijah was because of Malachi 4:5...

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. -Malachi 4:5

Based on that verse, many teachers in Jesus' day taught that the real Elijah would come before the Messiah came. Jesus later taught that John the Baptist was indeed a *type* of Elijah. Many scholars believe that the real Elijah WILL be seen again on earth before Christ's Second Coming. We'll talk more about Jesus' first and second coming as we go through John's gospel.

The reason they asked if John the Baptist was the Prophet was based on what Moses wrote...

The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren – Him you shall hear. -Deuteronomy 18:15

John the Baptist clearly stated that he was not any of those things: instead he was here to get them ready for One who was greater than them all! I hope in my life that I am as quick to point others toward Jesus as John was.

Verse 29 states what John the Baptist said when he saw Jesus coming toward him. Write it here:

In the Old Testament people would come to the priest with an animal sacrifice and confess their sins. The priest would lay his hands on the person's head, and then symbolically move his hands over to the animals, transferring the sins to the animal. Then the animal would be sacrificed so that the person would be forgiven and "clean." This sacrifice atoned, or paid for, the person's sin.

In Isaiah 53 the prophet said that one day the Messiah would bear the sin of the people:

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - every one - to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. -Isaiah 53:6

Isn't it wonderful that Jesus can take away our sin as the Lamb of God? YES IT IS!

In verse 27 John the Baptist says that even though Jesus comes after him He has surpassed him because He was before him. This brings up a true or false question (circle the correct answer)

True or False – John the Baptist was born before Mary gave birth to Jesus.

Luke's gospel tells us that John the Baptist was born a few months before Mary gave birth to Jesus. Why then does John the Baptist say that Jesus came before him?

Hint: If you need to, go back to John 1:1 to understand!

What does John the Baptist say Jesus will baptize with in verse 33? The H_____ S_____.

John's gospel will let us know exactly what this means as it goes along. As you pray today, give thanks to Jesus for being the Lamb of God who takes away *your* sin!

Day 3- Read John 1:35-51

Let's recap the 4 things in chapter 1 that start with the letter "L" that describe Jesus:

1. Logos
2. _____ (look at 1:4 if you need to)
3. _____ (look at 1:4-5 if you need to)
4. _____ of God (look at 1:29 if you need to)

Today we see Jesus recruit His first disciples. We also see the most basic way the good news about Jesus has always spread: from one person to other people.

My father-in-law recently told me about a company that makes grills, and continues to sell out of them each year, despite never advertising. All of their sales have come from "satisfied customers" telling their family members, friends, and everyone they meet how much they think about the product. Others then start to want what they have, and buy one themselves!

For 2,000 years Christians have been so satisfied with Jesus that they have invited others to "come and see" who Jesus is!

These verses present the passing on of the good news about Jesus as being like a baton passed to others in a relay race. Help me trace it by filling in the blanks below:

What two men did John the Baptist point to Jesus?

A _____ and another man (probably the writer of this gospel, John).

Those men were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah (as John the Baptist had said in verse 34) and followed Jesus.

Each man then told his brother about Jesus. The other gospels let us know that John told James his brother about Jesus.

Who did Andrew bring to Jesus? His brother S _____.

What nickname did Jesus give Simon in verse 42? _____

Cephas is an Aramaic term meaning Rock. Peter is the English equivalent of the Greek word for Rock. Based on what we read about Simon Peter in the gospel accounts, he probably wouldn't have been nicknamed Rock by his family and friends! He definitely shows courage in the gospels but also a tendency to be somewhat hasty with his words.

But here's the cool thing: whatever others saw in Simon based on who he was in the past and present, Jesus saw what he was going to become as a Christian: one of the leaders of the early church!

The same thing is true for us: Jesus has a wonderful plan for our life that will be much greater than any potential we see in ourselves.

In The Book of Revelation it actually says that Jesus has a nickname for each of us as well, a nickname He will tell us one day...

“And I will give him (the overcomer) a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” -Revelation 2:17b

In verse 43 we read that Jesus Himself reached out to Nathaniel.

One of the things I love about Jesus is that He never asks His disciples to do anything He didn't personally model. So He did what He asks us to do: bring people to Jesus!

Who did Philip then bring to Jesus in verse 45? His friend N_____.

Nathaniel was skeptical that anything good could come from Jesus' hometown of Nazareth, so it's not surprising that he had a question for Jesus. Write down the question he asks in verse 48?

Have you ever wondered if there was a God and if He knew you? I sure did! I wasn't always a Pastor! I was an atheist until I was 17 years old, and I wondered if God was out there and if He cared about Danny Campbell. It is really touching to me that Jesus, who as God knows all things, took the time to lovingly answer Nathaniel's questions (and my own).

Read verse 48 again. Jesus told Nathaniel that He had seen Nathaniel under the fig tree. We are not told what happened under the fig tree, but I like to envision Nathaniel there "alone" in prayer, crying out to God to reveal Himself if He was really out there. Now the God who heard that prayer was standing before him!

When Nathaniel realized who was standing before him he changed instantly from a questioning skeptic to a testifying disciple! Jesus then told him, "you ain't seen nothing yet!

Don't miss that Chapter one shows us that Jesus knew Philip's past and Peter's future. Jesus is omniscient, which means that He is all-knowing, a sure hallmark that He is God.

In John 20:31 John writes that he has written this gospel to prove that Jesus is the Messiah.

List the four people who have testified in chapter one that Jesus is the Messiah:

J_____ the Baptist (v. 29, 34)

A_____ (v. 40-41)

P_____ (v. 45)

N_____ (v. 49)

As you pray today, embrace the call to follow this Jesus. Thank Him that He knows your past, present, and future, and even has a nickname for you!

Day 4- Read John 2:1-12

The gospels record dozens of miracles that Jesus did. John saw them all, but in the gospel of John he carefully records 7 to help prove that Jesus is who He claimed to be: the Messiah, the Son of God.

According to verse 1, where did this first miracle of Jesus occur?

If your Bible has maps in the back of it, turn there, and try to find this city and the city of Nazareth on the map.

Both Cana and Nazareth are in the Galilee region, the most northern of Israel's regions. Cana is about 5 miles north of Nazareth.

A few days after Jesus called his first disciples, Jesus and his disciples and his mother Mary were invited and went to a wedding there.

It is possible that the groom was a relative of Mary, because of her particular concern in verse 3 that they had run out of wine. Weddings in those days were a weeklong affair, and it fell to the groom and his family to make sure everything went well. If it didn't, it would make people wonder if the groom was really going to be able to provide for the bride.

When Mary presents the problem to Jesus, how does he respond to her in verse 4?

Finish the sentence:

My hour _____.

Here is a key phrase in the gospel of John. Over and over again Jesus says, "My hour has not yet come." But the gospel builds up to the time when He finally says, "My time has come."

He is referring to the time when He will die on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, as prophesied in places like Isaiah 53.

The reason He answers Mary this way is to get her to think in her own heart if she is really ready for the heightened pressure of Jesus' public ministry to begin. When He begins working public miracles and preaching to crowds and confronting the sinful leaders about their sins, it will inevitably lead to His arrest and crucifixion.

Jesus is in essence warning her to be careful what she asks for, because it will involve a growing heartache for her. Nevertheless, in Mary's response in verse 5, we see what our own response to Jesus should be. Circle the correct answer according to verse 5...

We should do...

- A. None of what Jesus tells us to do**
- B. Whatever Jesus tells us to do**
- C. Only that which Jesus tells us to do that we already wanted to do**

We should do whatever Jesus tells us to do, so the answer is B. At the end of chapter one we learned that Jesus is omniscient, He is all-knowing.

In this miracle we see that Jesus is also omnipotent – He is all-powerful. Jesus can change one thing into another!

Now one of the things pastors like me often say is that God can use anybody, and seems to delight in doing things through overlooked people on earth. Later Paul writes...

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.” -I Corinthians 1:26-31

I would think that when God came to earth, He may have met with key religious leaders or kings first, to show them His power and have them use their influence to win over the people. But that's not what Jesus did!

According to verses 7-9, who were the first people to see Jesus do a miracle?

Imagine the joy those servants had when they heard the master of ceremonies proclaiming that the groom had saved the best for last, and later realized that Jesus had included them in His first miracle.

Perhaps it was they who then told the disciples what Jesus had done, causing John the disciple to later write that through this miracle Jesus revealed His glory, and they believed in Him!

As you pray today, thank Jesus that He can turn one thing into another. The same God who turned water into wine also has the power to turn a sinner into a saint!

Day 5- Read John 2:13-25

Jewish men were commanded in the Old Testament law to go to Jerusalem three times each year for key festivals, or feasts. Even though they travelled south from the Galilee region, it was described as “going up” to Jerusalem, like ascending a hill or a mountain. That’s how important Jerusalem was to them. Another name for Jerusalem was Mount Zion.

Exodus 23 and Leviticus 23 describe all of the feasts they were to observe throughout the year. The three they had to go to Jerusalem for each year were the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which included the Passover ceremony, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Much of Jesus’ activity in the gospels is built around the time He and His disciples spent in Jerusalem at these feasts. During the festivals crowds would swell Jerusalem’s streets with Jewish people from all over the country and surrounding countries. The Jewish Temple would be the center of specific sacrifices as people from all over came to worship Yahweh their God.

The Feast of Passover celebrated the time when God miraculously delivered the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. You can read about that in Exodus chapters 12-14.

When He got to the Temple courts (the outer part of the Temple), Jesus’ heart swelled with righteous anger because of the commotion there. That part of the Temple was filled with sacrificial animals for sale. That was probably a good service to provide, as it may have been impractical for those coming from great distances to bring their sacrifice all the way with them.

But to make money from this, the religious leaders had instituted the practice that the sacrificial animals could only be bought using a special temple-issued coin. When people exchanged their money for the coins, an excessive fee would be charged to change the money.

That must have upset Jesus greatly, and should serve to warn church leaders today about taking the focus off of worshipping God. Write down Jesus’ words in verse 16 here...

But there was a greater issue going on that probably upset Jesus most of all. When Mark records a second time that Jesus cleansed the Temple, Jesus says...

“Is it not written: My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of thieves.” -Mark 11:17

When Solomon dedicated the Temple back in 2 Chronicles chapters 6, he had actually prayed that when foreigners came to the Temple and prayed there, God would answer their prayers and make Himself known to them (see 2 Chr. 6:32-33). That happened for the Queen of Sheba!

The way the Temple was set up, only the High priest could go into the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of the Temple (and only once a year). Then there was another small area only priests

could enter. Then there was a court where only Jewish men, but not women, could go. Then there was a place where Jewish women, could go. And then outside of all of those “courts” there was a place for Gentile foreigners to pray and seek God.

The Jewish leaders in Jesus’ day cared so little about foreigners being able to meet Yahweh that they placed the moneychangers and the sacrifices in the only place designated for foreigners to meet with Yahweh. Obviously the commotion kept that from happening.

And it made Jesus angry! I find myself cheering when I think of how the Lord of the Temple personally cleansed the Temple of its idolatrous practices, showing how much He wants everyone in the world to know God!

It’s amazing that Jesus didn’t get arrested right then. In verse 18 the religious leaders confronted Jesus and asked Him by what authority He had done these things.

In a very real sense, this is the central issue of the gospels: whether or not Jesus is really God and our ultimate authority. If He is, then we better get right with Him now before we face Him as our Final Judge.

It’s no surprise that in answer to their question Jesus refers to His coming resurrection in verse 19. By the time we get to the end of the gospel of John, we will see that the miracle of Christ rising from the dead is the Final Confirmation that Jesus is indeed the world’s Authority.

Verse 23 lets us know that Jesus performed many miracles while He was in Jerusalem, and many people started believing in Him. The quiet days before that first miracle in Cana would be no more!

Now look at verse 25.

Circle the phrase below that best describes what verse 25 says about Jesus:

Jesus is omnipotent

Jesus is omniscient

The word omnipotent means all-powerful. The word omniscient means all-knowing. You should have circled the second one, that Jesus is omniscient.

In Ephesians 4:26 the Bible tells us to be angry but sin not.

As you pray today, ask Jesus to help you be angry at the same things that make Him angry. Also ask Him for help in discovering appropriate ways to do something about the world’s injustices without sinning.

Day 6- Read John 3:1-15

Today's passage includes one of Jesus' most intriguing conversations, with a man named Nicodemus, that leads up to the most well-known verse in the gospel of John: John 3:16.

Nicodemus' name means, "Victor over the people."

List the two things verse one says about Nicodemus:

Scholars think the word Pharisee comes from a Hebrew word meaning "to separate." Pharisees tried extra hard to obey the Old Testament Law, "separating" themselves from those who minimized or rejected parts of the Old Testament (like Sadducees).

That in itself is admirable, but they tended by Jesus' day to focus so much on external matters of obedience that they lacked a vibrant internal faith and love for God and people. In their misguided zeal they also made up extra laws for the people to obey, some of which were just plain silly legalism and others that were downright oppressive. They tended to be very judgmental of those who were not as strict as they were.

Many of them were not priests or scribes but influential businessmen. Their influence over the common way of life in Israel was enormous, and they were well represented on the Sanhedrin, the ruling body over the Jewish people. The Sanhedrin was composed of the High Priest, who served as its President, the chief priests, elders (family heads of the tribes), and scribes (key teachers).

When verse 1 says that Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, it probably means he was a member of the Sanhedrin. This is the group that later in John's gospel will put Jesus on trial.

This very important man (VIP) came to see Jesus at night, perhaps afraid of what his fellow rulers would think of him talking with the Man that had caused quite a stir in Jerusalem. Everyone was talking about the miracles Jesus had done and His cleansing of the Temple.

Nicodemus wanted Jesus to know that he was impressed with Jesus. Jesus ignored the flattery though, and used the opportunity to show Nicodemus his spiritual need.

According to verse 3, what does Jesus say needs to happen for a person to go to Heaven:

They must be born _____.

I have met people that claim to be Christians, but who almost proudly say, "but we're not the born again kind." According to Jesus, though, there is no such thing as being a Christian and going to Heaven if you have not been born again.

Nicodemus immediately asks how a grown person can be born a second time. In Jesus' answer to Nicodemus, we find a beautiful explanation of what needs to happen to any person who wants to go to Heaven. Finish the statement after looking at verse 5:

To enter God's kingdom a person has to be born of water AND born of the _____.

Before a woman gives birth, we speak of her water breaking. For 9 months the baby has been in a sac of fluid, and at birth the baby and the fluid comes gushing out together. Jesus is referring to our physical birth here. That has happened to everyone. But NOT everyone has had a spiritual birth. Thus to go to Heaven we have to be born again, or born of the Spirit.

In the book of Ephesians, Paul says that is what had happened to the believers there. Look up and write down Ephesians 2:1 and 2:4-5 here:

It may help us understand these two concepts if we lay them on top of each other:

Physical birth	=	Born of water	=	Dead in sin	=	Hell-bound
Spiritual birth	=	Born of Spirit	=	Alive in Christ	=	Heaven-bound

To bring this truth home to Nicodemus, who still did not understand, Jesus reminds Nicodemus of an event that happened to the children of Israel in the days of Moses.

Look again at verse 14. Jesus is referring to events recorded in Numbers 21:4-9.

The people had sinned and had been judged by being bitten by snakes and they were going to die. Jesus is saying this corresponds to the problem Nicodemus had: because of judgment on sin he was going to die. In His mercy God had Moses construct a bronze snake, and when the dying snake-bite victims looked up at it, God spared their lives. Jesus is saying this corresponds to what His atoning death is going to do for Nicodemus if he believes: give him new birth, life instead of judgment.

Friend, you must recognize that you are a sinner and acknowledge that your sins deserve judgment. Then look away from yourself to Jesus, and recognize that he was "lifted up" on the cross to provide salvation for you when you believe in Him. If you haven't already, receive Him into your life today! If you need to, refer back to the prayer from the end of Day 1.

Day 7- Read John 3:16-36

Today's passage includes the most memorable verse in John's gospel and perhaps the entire Bible, John 3:16.

The question of whether or not God cares about people is settled by what Jesus did on the cross. It is the supreme expression of His love for mankind: His willingness to die to deal with the wrath due our sins, so that we could be rescued from our sins.

What does John 3:16 promise that those who believe in Jesus will receive?

We should keep track of these promises as we go through the gospel of John. We can now add this promise of eternal life to the promise back in John 1:12 that those who receive Jesus get to become children of God.

As important as John 3:16 is, the next two verses, John 3:17-18, give us crucial background information about why Jesus' death on the cross was necessary. After looking at those verses, answer this question by circling whether it is True or False.

True or False: Those who don't know Jesus are already condemned because of their sins.

It is crucial that we understand the answer to that question is true. The Bible teaches that although each of us is created in the image and likeness of God, Adam and Eve's sin infected all their descendants with a sin nature.

You may have heard about women who are addicted to crack cocaine having children who are born with cocaine in their systems, sometimes called "crack babies." Each of us is a "sin baby," born with a sin nature, and before long after birth we also start making sinful choices.

Therefore we are all sinners by nature and by choice. Each sin has built-in consequences that will be experienced after we have sinned. The biggest consequence of our sinful condition is that we are separated from God.

Our holy God cannot allow sin into His presence. Even though He loves us as His creation, if He accepted us without dealing with our sin, our sin would taint Heaven.

That's why the cross is so critical! At the cross God's love and justice intersect.

For those who believe, God the Father takes the wrath due their sin and places it on Jesus Christ, dealing decisively with the penalty due their sin. For those who don't ever repent and believe, they will still face the wrath of God due their sin, because they have rejected Christ's loving death in their place.

Write John 3:36 here:

Many other verses in the Bible tell us the same thing about what the cross means, including Romans 3:23-26 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Here is a good way to picture our need and what Christ did for us. Imagine yourself drowning in the ocean, in this case an ocean of sin. You are going to drown. At that point a rescue ship comes to you, and a life preserver is thrown down to you. If you grab it, you will be rescued. If you do not, you will have happen to you what already would have happened if the ship never came. You will drown without grabbing the life preserver. You will have life if you grab it.

Jesus came to earth the first time not to judge the world, but to save those who will receive His salvation! God loves us so much He came to earth for the most important rescue mission of all time!



In verses 22 to 30 we see our old friend John the Baptist again. Some of those who were still with him as he was finishing his life mission were upset because so many people were following Jesus now. They didn't understand that pointing people to Jesus was John's life mission!

What does John the Baptist compare himself to in verse 29?

I hope my life and ministry does what John the Baptist's did: point people to Jesus. John the Baptist wanted the focus to be on the Groom, Jesus, and His love for the bride, the church. John the Baptist was merely the best man, helping the Groom in any way he could. And just as a best man is overjoyed for his friend the Groom on his wedding day, John the Baptist was excited that he could shine the spotlight on Jesus. Write verse 30 here:

As you pray today, thank Jesus for His rescue mission to earth to save sinners like you and me. Also make John the Baptist's humble statement your prayer, "Jesus, please become more greatly known in and through me, while my own self-serving and selfish tendencies decrease."

Day 8- Read John 4:1-42

We have already discovered that John wrote this gospel so that people would believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him they would have eternal life in His name (John 20:31).

So far in John's gospel everyone who has expressed interest in and followed Jesus has been Jewish. John 3:16 told us how much God loves the WORLD, not only those who are Jews. In chapter 4 we see Jesus expand his outreach beyond Jews to Samaritans and Romans.

There were three regions within first century Israel: Judea in the South, Samaria in the Middle, and Galilee in the North.

Due to political events in the past, the region known as Samaria had come to be very different than Judea and Galilee. When Israel was divided into two countries in the time known as the divided kingdom, Samaria was one of the places that served as the capitol of the North. It was known for its idolatrous practices, some of which are referred to in this chapter.

At one time Samaria had been under the control of a country known as Assyria. During that occupation, Assyrians and Jewish people intermarried and a new people group was created, known as the Samaritans. They were looked down upon by Jews, who would actually travel around Samaria to avoid having contact with Samaritans. With that in mind, write verse 4 here:

Jesus doesn't care about the silly rules that people have set up that divide people of different ethnicities. When it says "He needed to go through Samaria," it was because of His desire for Samaritans to also hear about the eternal life they could have in His name.

There are many beautiful things about the way Jesus witnesses to this woman. He goes to where she is, talks with her about something they have in common (the physical need for water), and then speaks to her about her spiritual needs. When she tries to change the subject, He points her back to what the Bible teaches is true and to Himself as the Messiah the Bible speaks about.

In verses 17-18 Jesus shows that He knows her past even though He hasn't met her. Circle the word that means that Jesus knows all things:

Omnipotent

Omniscient

Omnipresent

Refer to day 3 if you need to for the answer.

According to verses 23-24, what kind of worshippers is the Father seeking?

If we leave either one of those things out, our worship gets unbalanced. If we worship in truth without spirit, we can get legalistic like the Pharisees were. If we worship in spirit without truth, we can get idolatrous like the Samaritans were, or too liberal like the Sadducees were. True worshippers are rooted in the truth of God's Word, while at the same time having a loving spirit.

According to verses 28-29, what's the first thing the lady does after she comes to believe that Jesus could be the Christ, the Messiah?

She did the same thing Jesus' first disciples did back in chapter 1! She told those she knew about Jesus! As Jesus' Jewish disciples try to process what had happened, they see the woman coming back toward Jesus with a crowd of her fellow Samaritans.

Jesus uses this as a teachable moment!

What does Jesus compare the crowds of people to in verses 34-38?

What a lesson for us as well! People are the harvest! God invites us to join Him in what He is doing in the lives of other people!

According to verse 40, how long did Jesus and His disciples stay in that Samaritan city?

_____ days.

I would love to have been a "fly on the wall" over those next two days as Jesus' Jewish disciples talked to those Samaritans!

Verse 42 lets us know that as a result of the Samaritan woman's testimony and the ministry of Jesus there, many more people came to believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world!

Interestingly, chapter 3 ended without a clear response from Nicodemus the Jewish leader. But here lots of Samaritans were responding to Jesus! John's gospel seems to be clearly contrasting the glad-hearted response of the Samaritans to Jesus with the lack of commitment by those in the religious establishment.

As you pray today, ask God to give you a heart for people of all ethnicities like Jesus modeled. Ask Him to use you to break through the silly barriers people erect between each other. One of the greatest promises in the Bible is that there will be someone from every ethnic group in Heaven.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from EVERY nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. -Revelation 7:9

Day 9- Read John 4:43-54

After Jesus and His disciples won many people to faith in the Samaritan town of Sychar, they continued their journey back to His home region of Galilee.

Many of the people there had travelled to the Passover Festival and had been talking about the other miracles, or signs, that Jesus had performed.

Verses 44-45 indicate that reaction to Jesus back in His home region was somewhat mixed.

In verse 48 Jesus seems to lament that the people are more interested in seeing a miracle than having a personal relationship with God through repentance and faith.

Back in chapter two, what city was it that Jesus did His first miracle in?

_____ in Galilee.

Interestingly, the second miracle John includes happened there as well!

It says in verses 46-47 that a certain nobleman came to Jesus. The words in the Greek read ‘a royal official.’ What background would a royal official probably have? Circle the most probable answer:

- A. Galilean Jew
- B. Samaritan
- C. Roman citizen (a Gentile)
- D. Judean Jew

You’ll remember that all parts of Israel were occupied by the Roman Empire. The Emperor of the Roman Empire was called Caesar. Each of the three regions of Israel had governors under the authority of Rome. In Judea that was a man named Pilate. In Galilee that was a man named Herod Antipas. Later Jesus will stand trial before both of those men.

Therefore the man in verses 46-47 was probably also a Roman citizen and a Gentile (non-Jew). The answer above is letter ‘C.’

This royal official probably served under the authority of Herod Antipas. Later when Jesus appears before Herod Antipas, we are told that for some time he had wanted to meet Jesus because of the things he had heard about Him. Look at what Luke 23:8 says...

Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. -Luke 23:8

Undoubtedly the Royal Official spoken of in today’s passage had told Herod Antipas what Jesus had done for his son!

Now think about Jesus' disciples for a moment. They had just seen Jesus throw away the cultural rules about not interacting with Samaritans. They had also been told by their religious leaders that when the Messiah came, he would throw off Roman oppression. And yet here in this passage Jesus works a miracle for one of the despised Romans! Truly John chapter 4 illustrates the truth presented in John 3:16, that God loves the *entire* world, all peoples!

What is the MOST amazing thing about this miraculous healing of the official's son?

- A. It happens to a Gentile instead of a Jew
- B. Jesus isn't even in the same physical location the boy is when the miracle happens
- C. It happens in Galilee instead of in Judea
- D. None of the Above.

We saw Jesus' power when he turned water into wine. That first miracle showed that He is Lord over the physical realm, able to change one thing into another. This miracle also shows His power, but involves His ability to be in one place yet act to heal in another! The answer I was looking for above is therefore "B."

This miracle shows that Jesus is Lord over the dimensions of time and space. The man learns that the moment Jesus said "your son will live" in the city of Cana, the boy was healed in the city of Capernaum.

When Jesus came to earth He voluntarily assumed the time and space limitations being in a human body placed on Him (Philippians chapter 2 explains more about this). We shouldn't think of this word "limited" as meaning Jesus was somehow less than God while on earth. He voluntarily chose to limit how He used His divine power while on earth. He humbly chose to only use His divine power to help other people and delay His death long enough to pour basic teaching into His disciples. He never used His power for personal gain.

The Spirit inside Jesus was not bound to a body, and so Jesus was able to be in one place and act to heal in another. So this miracle brings together three truths about Jesus that were described as characteristics of God Himself in the Old Testament...

Jesus is omnipotent, all powerful. Jesus is omniscient, all knowing. The Spirit of Jesus is omnipresent, everywhere present. This miracle makes a compelling argument for Jesus being God!

What does verse 53 tell us the reaction of the Royal official was to this miracle?

As you pray today, thank God that He brings all different kinds of people to faith in Christ. Also express your gratitude that even though Jesus is in Heaven, He can work a miracle in our lives no matter what zip code we live in!

Day 10- Read John 5:1-15

Circle the best answer: True OR False:

The religious leader's main reaction to the healing of the invalid was happiness for him.

It's sad but the answer is false. One of the main things this passage does is contrast the new-found faith of the Samaritans and the Roman official's family with the pettiness of the religious leaders in Jerusalem.

According to verse 5, how long had the man been an invalid? _____ years.

We would expect to see at least some awe and joy for the man from those who were his religious leaders. Instead, we see them chastise him for "working" on the Sabbath. But if you look you won't find an Old Testament verse that calls carrying a mat work.

The Old Testament did call for the Sabbath to be a time of rest and worship without work. The Pharisees had done what legalists always do: they had added their rules to the Old Testament and expected their followers to not only obey God's Words in the Bible but their extra words as well.

Thus the man hadn't broken God's laws at all. The religious leaders cared more about their extra rules than what God had done in the life of a needy man! May we not make the same mistake today!

This passage brings together two things that need to be connected when we receive a healing touch from the Lord.

In verse 6 Jesus asks the man "Do you want to be well?" After Jesus heals the man, in verse 14 Jesus tells him to stop sinning. A lot of people want to be healed of something, but they don't want to turn from their sin to a life of faith in Jesus.

In God's sovereignty many others who were by the pool of Bethesda at the Sheep Gate did not get healed that day. Jesus did heal this man, but His words in verse 14 make clear that the physical healing would do Him no good if He was not spiritually healed as well.

In other words, it is better to be an invalid who has faith in Jesus and is going to Heaven, then a man that can walk yet is a slave to sin and going to Hell.

As you pray today, ask God to give you a heart to share God's love in word and deed with people like the invalid. And thank God for the ways John's gospel makes clear we are to love every kind of person we come in contact with!

Day 11- Read John 5:16-30

If verse 16 wasn't so seriously sad, it would be downright hilarious!

The religious leaders would have stated that they did everything they did for God, and their extra rules helped them do that. Yet here was Jesus standing before them, God in human flesh, and they criticized and persecuted Him for not conforming to *their* expectations!

But as this passage makes clear, instead of judging Jesus they needed to come to understand that He would judge them one day! We need to understand that as well!

Today's passage gives us some really neat information about the relationship within the Triune God between the Father and Jesus.

In what way do we see the equality of Father and Son in these verses? Circle Best Answer:

- A. Just as the Father is always working, Jesus is always working (Even on the Sabbath)
- B. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does in like manner
- C. The Father raises the dead and gives them life; the Son gives life to whom He wills
- D. The Son should be honored just as the Father is honored
- E. As the Father has life in Himself, the Son has life in Himself
- F. All of the Above

Now there are those who teach that Jesus never claimed to be God when He was on earth. John's gospel clearly refutes that contention. Over and over again Jesus states that He is fully divine, including all of the above reasons in our verses for today. The religious leaders of the day clearly understood He was making that claim. Look again at verse 18, and circle the best answer below.

True or False: The religious leaders understood that Jesus was claiming equality with God.

Verse 18 shows they understood that Jesus was claiming to be God. It is obvious they did not believe Him, because they were already looking for a way to kill Him, and stepped up efforts to do so after this chapter.

Jesus' rejection by the leaders of His own Jewish people stands in sharp contrast to how He had been embraced by common Jewish fishermen like Peter and John, repentant sinners like the Samaritan woman, and the Roman official.

Nobody gets to be neutral about Jesus: all must choose to go on rejecting Him or believe.

In verse 24 Jesus makes three promises to the one who believes. Write them here:

- 1. E _____ L _____
- 2. Shall not come into _____
- 3. Has passed from _____ into life.

Now at this point we have to reconcile this passage with John chapter 3. In John 3:16-18, we read that Jesus came not to judge, but to save from sin's consequences. But in John 5:22-30 we read that Jesus will be the judge humankind stands before.

Write down your thoughts on how the two passages can be reconciled:

A key phrase that helps us understand is in verse 28, when Jesus says, "the hour is coming."

Sometimes Christians talk about the first and second coming of Jesus Christ. John 3 is talking about His first coming, when Jesus came to earth to die as a substitutionary atonement, to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In His first coming, Jesus came not to judge, but to save an already condemned world. This first coming would fulfill Old Testament prophecies like Isaiah 53 of the Messiah being a "Suffering Servant."

But "the hour is coming" when Jesus will return to earth not as the Lamb of God but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who will judge the earth in righteousness. This "hour" is spoken of many times throughout the Bible, many times as the "Day of the Lord." That time is still future, and will fulfill the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah being a "Conquering King."

We are living in the days between the two comings. The Bible teaches that the delay is so the good news about Jesus' salvation can extend to the ends of the earth. Look up and write down 2 Peter 3:9 here:

As you pray today, thank God that He didn't just come and judge the earth the first time. Thank Him for how the good news about Jesus is spreading to every people group on earth. Make it your life's ambition to do what Jesus modeled: joining the Father in what He is doing!

Day 12- Read John 5:31-47

In today's passage Jesus anticipates one of the main objections that the religious leaders will make. They will try to discredit Him by saying that His testimony about Himself is not valid because He is just one man making claims.

Based on the scriptures, that's a valid point. Look up and write down Deuteronomy 19:15 here:

Anticipating their objections, in this passage Jesus refers to 4 witnesses who testify of Him.

Draw a line from the verses on the left to the witness referred to on the right:

Verses 33-35	God the Father
Verse 36	The Old Testament Scriptures/ words of Moses
Verse 37	John the Baptist
Verses 39-40, 45-47	The works/ signs/ miracles Jesus had done

<>

Let's take each of these witnesses in the order that Jesus speaks of them.

In verses 33-35, Jesus refers to the testimony of John the Baptist. The entire nation regarded John the Baptist as a bonafide prophet, like Elijah or Jeremiah from the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament we read that if a prophet really has received a message from God, than it will be completely true...

“You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?” If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.” -Deuteronomy 18:21-22

Baseball players are considered great hitters if they bat “400,” which means they get a hit 40% of the time. The standard for true prophets was batting “1000,” meaning when they said they spoke from God, they were to be right every time or be discredited.

Jesus is calling John the Baptist as a witness to Himself. He's saying, "You guys know that John the Baptist is a true prophet, don't forget what he said about me."

Write down what John the Baptist had said about Jesus in John 1:29-34:

In verse 36 Jesus refers to the miracles He has done and will do as a testimony to Him.

The miracles we have already seen Jesus do demonstrate that He has the same traits ascribed to Yahweh in the Old Testament. He is all-powerful! He is all-knowing! His Spirit is everywhere present! And they haven't seen anything yet – amazing miracles are yet to come, including the biggest- Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead!

In verse 37 Jesus refers to the Father as a witness to Him.

This one would probably be the most difficult for them to accept, because it couldn't be proven by putting the Father on a witness stand. But I believe it was the one that meant the most to Jesus personally. Jesus knew who He was in relationship to His heavenly Father, and it made Him able to face all of the hostility and rejection that He faced on earth.

My prayer for you is that you will come to know who you are in Christ, in relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit, and resting in that will give you love, joy, and peace in the middle of whatever troubles you face in life.

In verses 39-40, and verses 45-47, Jesus refers to how the Old Testament prophecies are a compelling witness to Him being the Messiah.

One of the unique things about the Bible is that it has hundreds of predictive prophecies, dozens of which are about the Messiah. When you go back and put them together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, they form a portrait that only One Man in the history of the world's billions of people measures up to: Jesus. In this passage He dares them to start putting the predictive prophecies together and meet Him as Immanuel, God with us!

Verses 39-40 let us know that studying the Bible is not an end in itself; Bible study is to lead us to a genuine and vibrant relationship with the living God through Jesus Christ. As you pray today, ask Jesus to make your Bible study come alive in helping you grow closer to Him!

Day 13- Read John 6:1-15

We come now to the fourth of the seven miracles of Jesus that John’s gospel highlights.

By way of review, write the chapter number each of the previous miracles appeared in:

Turning water into wine in Cana of Galilee	Chapter _____
Healing the royal official’s son in Capernaum from Cana	Chapter _____
Healing the invalid in Jerusalem	Chapter _____

In chapter 5, Jesus had said that the miracles He worked were testifying to His identity. I can almost see the religious leaders meeting together in a “war room” and discussing every way possible to minimize the impact of Jesus’ miracles.

One thing they could not do was deny that Jesus was working miracles! Crowds of people had now seen Jesus heal people. One of their own leaders, Nicodemus, had been so impressed by the miracles that He went to see Jesus at night back in chapter 3.

What did Nicodemus exclaim about Jesus’ miracles back in 3:2? Write it here:

I wonder if in their meeting discussing how to discredit Jesus, they started to say, “Remember that Old Testament prophets like Elijah and Elisha were also able to work miracles. So what Jesus is doing is really no big deal, because other prophets have worked miracles before. It doesn’t prove He is the Son of God.”

With Jesus being all-knowing He probably knew that this would be one of the ways they would try to explain the miracles. So in chapter 6 we see two God-sized miracles back to back: the feeding of 5,000 men with a sack lunch, and Jesus walking on water. Together these mighty miracles are further testimony that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God.

Verse 6 lets us know that Jesus knew the miracle that He was about to perform, but asked Philip where they could find food enough for the crowds. It says Jesus asked this to “test” Philip. God never tempts us, but He does test us to see if we really believe in Him (and to grow us!).

Philip told Jesus that they simply did not have the resources to feed such a large crowd. A half year’s wages would only buy this size crowd a bite-sized snack.

Mark’s gospel reports that somewhere in here Jesus said to His disciples, “You feed them!”

Of course they couldn’t do it with the resources they had.

What do you think Jesus was trying to teach His disciples?

This passage teaches one of the great truths about our calling as Christians: We are called to do what we cannot do with what we do not have for the rest of our lives.

Say that again a few times to yourself slowly. The Christian life was never intended to be lived in our own strength. From the moment we become a Christian we must rely on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God to do in and through us what we could never do on our own.

I can present the gospel to someone but I can't save their soul. Only God can do that! I can counsel a married couple to stay together, but only God can put a broken home back together. Our call as Christians is a spiritual one that requires us to humbly rely on resources from God.

That's not to say that we shouldn't offer all we have to Jesus. Our little can become much when we allow God to use everything we have.

Look at verse 8. I love how Andrew is always bringing people to Jesus. In chapter 1 we saw him bring his brother to Jesus. In chapter 12 he brings some Greeks to Jesus. Here he brings a lad to Jesus. And the little boy is willing to give his lunch to Jesus to help feed the crowd.

What a miracle! With that little boy's lunch Jesus feeds 5,000 men. When women and children are counted, it is possible around 20,000 people ate that day. All from Jesus taking a little and turning it into a lot!

Lest there be any doubt it was a tremendous miracle, there was more food left over than they started with!

Write the people's response to this miracle in verse 14:

The prophet they are speaking about is not just a prophet, but THE prophet Moses had said would come into the world...

The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear. -Deuteronomy 18:15

Any attempt by the religious leaders to minimize what kind of prophet Jesus was had been forever defeated by this amazing miracle!

As you pray today, commit to give Jesus everything you have like the little boy did, while at the same time trusting Him to do in and through you what He alone can do!

Day 14- Read John 6:16-24

After Jesus fed 5,000 men, the people were abuzz and convinced that Jesus was THE great prophet Moses had spoken of. They also understood Him to be the Messiah King that the Old Testament prophets had said would come into the world.

John 6:15 lets us know that right then they were going to force Jesus to be their King. Jesus knew this and used His power to slip away from them, going up to the mountain by Himself.

The other gospels let us know that Jesus told His disciples to get in a boat and go to the other side of the lake (the Sea of Galilee). After dark they were met by a huge storm.

True or False: For His own reasons sometimes Jesus sends His disciples into a storm.

Many times when we face a storm some well-meaning but misguided saint will tell us we are probably in the storm because we disobeyed Jesus or didn't hear His instructions right.

But in this case, the disciples were in the storm because they had heard Jesus right and obeyed Him. Many times obedience to Jesus involves going through some type of suffering in this fallen world. Thankfully, God is at work in the middle of the storms we face! The statement is true!

In this case, in the middle of the storm the disciples saw one of the greatest miracles of Jesus recorded in the gospels!

How did Jesus come to them in verse 19?

Here is another miracle showing that Jesus is all-powerful!

This should not surprise us, because John 1:3 told us that Jesus is the Creator of all matter. In chapter two He turned water into wine. Why should it surprise us that here He turned water into a walking track?

Another incident is recorded in Mark chapter 4 when Jesus and His disciples were in a boat and there was another storm. Jesus was sleeping in the back of the boat, so they woke Him up. Immediately He rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm (Mark 4:39). The disciples' response was to exclaim...

"Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" -Mark 4:41

One of the great words in the gospels is the Greek word *exousia*, which is translated by different words like "authority, right, and power." The gospel writers make the compelling argument that Jesus is the world's ultimate authority. One of the main questions the religious leaders have for Jesus is "by what authority do you do what you do?"

One of the main things the miracles show is that Jesus is the rightful authority of the world.

He is Lord over the physical realm –

Weather obeys Him; He can turn one element into another; He can walk on water; He can make body parts that didn't work start to work!

He is Lord over the moral realm –

He claimed the right to clarify Old Testament doctrine. He said He was the Lord of the Sabbath!

Write Matthew 7:28-29 here:

He is Lord over the spiritual realm –

Demons had to obey Him when He cast them out of people. And He forgave sin, something only God had the right to do.

Write Mark 2:10 here:

These two miracles in John chapter 6, the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus walking on water, make an incredible statement backing up His claims to be the Messiah, the Son of God. He is our ultimate authority, as He Himself has said...

“All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” -Matthew 28:18-20

As you pray today, thank Jesus for so clearly demonstrating His authority, His Lordship over all things. Commit to follow Him as the Lord of your life!

Day 15- Read John 6:25-71

Today's passage goes along beautifully with the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. Having met the multitudes' physical need for bread, Jesus now speaks to the crowds about their bigger need, the spiritual need they have to know Him as the Bread of Life.

Bread is still important today, but it was a basic necessity for those Jesus spoke to. Jesus' words to them in verse 26 show that the miracle may have changed the crowd's interest in Him. They had come to see Him do miracles; now they were thinking of Him in terms of a possible source of constant bread! Unlike us, getting bread was something they had to "work" at.

Just like He had done with the Samaritan woman's need for water at the well, Jesus turns the conversation from their physical need for bread to their greater spiritual need. In verse 28 they wonder what work they can do to get THAT bread.

What does Jesus tell them in verse 29 they must do to get the "food" that endures to eternal life? _____

The people's response is to ask Jesus for a sign! I guess they had forgotten all the signs they had already seen! Jesus response is to give them the first of at least 7 "I Am" statements that John's gospel records. It is obvious that Jesus is saying to them, "I Am the sign you are looking for!"

Fill in the missing word in the following verses:

I am the _____ of Life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. -John 6:35

I am the _____ which came down from Heaven. -John 6:41

I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the _____ of life. -John 6:47-48

I am the living _____ which came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this _____, he will live forever; And the _____ that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of this world. -John 6:51

I learned in school that "repetition is the mother of all learning." Jesus repeats Himself four times here so they would get that He is the Savior of the world.

Jesus also intentionally uses these words, "I Am," to let them know that He was God. In John 8:24, He will say, "Unless you believe that "I Am," you will die in your sins.

Look up Exodus 3:13-14. Write Exodus 3:14 below:

As we go through John's gospel, we'll see that Jesus is saying that He was and is that God Moses talked to at the burning bush!

Back in John 6 we read in verses 52-66 that some of those who had followed Jesus did not like this talk by Jesus of having to eat His flesh and drink His blood. They stopped calling themselves His disciples, turned back, and no longer followed Him.

Jesus words will take on new significance later when He gives them the Lord's Supper as a regular act of worship they were to engage in. But the deeper meaning here is that Jesus is not interested in having "disciples" who are only casually committed to Him. He calls His disciples to "eat" of Him fully, not to merely "taste" Him as one option among other foods.

To make clear that true disciples do become fully committed to Him, this chapter begins using language that attributes real faith to a sovereign work of God.

Which of these statements show God's initiative in salvation?

- A. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me (v. 37)
- B. This is the will of Him...that I shall lose nothing of all that He has given Me (v. 39)
- C. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him (v. 44)
- D. It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all (v.63)
- E. All of the above

Now it must be remembered that those verses are side by side with verses that say a person is saved by coming to Jesus, believing in Him, and Jesus' strong words calling for us to fully commit to Him. All of the above statements speak of the great mystery that God is the initiator in salvation, but somehow are to be understood as complementing God's call for sinners to respond to Jesus!

Verses 66-68 are very meaningful to me. God used these to give me assurance of my salvation as a young Christian. It had been two years since I had received Christ, and I went home on college break discouraged and thinking about walking away from the faith. God brought me to this passage, and Peter's words in verse 68 became my own forever. Write them here:

I realized that even though I still had so far to go in my Christian faith, I was no longer the person I once was. Going back was not an option: Christ had become my life. From that day forward I have had times of discouragement, but I have never doubted my salvation.

As you pray today, ask Jesus to keep you from having a superficial commitment to Christ. If the words in verse 68 express your own faith, personalize them as you pray to the Lord today.

Day 16- Read John 7:1-24

We often can't help ourselves. We think if the numbers of people coming to our church are greater this year than a year ago, it means we are successful and in the will of God. Conversely, if less people are coming than it means we have failed and must be doing something wrong.

Chapter 6 started with crowds of people excited about Jesus and "following" Him because of the miracles they had seen Him do. But chapter 6 ended with the crowds becoming disillusioned with Jesus because of His call for full commitment. They actually stopped following Jesus!

The numbers of people following Jesus had gone from thousands to dozens in a short time!

Chapter 7 opens by telling us that during this time Jesus was going around in Galilee, His home region. No doubt He continued to faithfully teach His disciples and help individuals during these "silent days."

In my own ministry I have learned that two things often happen during "silent days" like this. First, some of my best ministry has happened during those days when it appeared that not a whole lot was happening. Second, some of the most hurtful criticism I have endured have been during those times when critics are looking for outward signs of "success."

According to verses 3-4, who was criticizing Jesus for His lack of "success?"

If you have ever been unfairly criticized by those in your family or church family, know from these verses that Jesus can relate to you.

According to verse 5, what was behind their criticism of Jesus?

I love Jesus' cool response in verse 6.

He lets them know that they are operating on false assumptions. For them, they believed this world was all there was, so there was an urgency to get everything done they could in the limited time they had.

Jesus knew that beyond this time on earth there is an eternity with God for believers. He didn't need to act as if this world was all there is, because He knew this world was not all there is.

It reminds me of something I have heard and said as a preacher: This world is the only Heaven an unbeliever will ever know; after this life awaits a miserable eternity in Hell. No wonder the world concentrates on "living for the moment." But for the believer, this world is the only Hell they will ever know; after this life awaits a glorious future in Heaven and the New Earth. No wonder believers are better able to cope with disappointment and hardship in this world.

Now we can learn a couple of things from Jesus here. First, Jesus does not let them egg Him on make Him switch His plans for when He will go up to the feast. Second, we should never give up on those who criticize us. Later, some of His brothers will believe. The New Testament books of James and Jude were written by the Lord's brothers!

The Feast of Booths was the last of the three yearly festivals that Jewish males were required to go to each year. It was a reminder of the days that they had lived in tents between their bondage in Egypt and when they entered the Promised Land.

The Feast was also known as the Feast of Ingathering because it was observed in the fall after all the crops had been harvested and gathered. It was by far the most joyful of Israel's feast.

Over the years, two very meaningful celebrations had been added to the Feast. One was a water pouring ceremony initiated by the priest that served as a prayer for life-giving rain for the land. The second was the Temple lighting ceremony that filled the night sky with light. Jesus will use both of these to point to Himself before chapter 8 is done!

Had Jesus been at the Feast the entire time, the religious leaders may have been successful in arresting Him. As it was, when He got there and started teaching He faced immediate scrutiny.

Of course, one of the things they were charging Him with was "working on the Sabbath." I love how in verse 23 He points out their hypocrisy: they work by circumcising boys on the Sabbath, so why should they be angry at grown men being made well on the Sabbath.

Write verse 24 here:

Like those religious leaders, sometimes we concentrate on outward things and use them to judge people. We need to be far more concerned with the total person, like Jesus was and is.

As you pray today, ask God to help you be faithful during "silent days." Thank Him that "success" in His eyes is being faithful to His call on your life over the long haul. Ask Him to help you put the real needs of people before judgmental opinions about them.

Day 17- Read John 7:25-52

As this passage opens, Jesus has been teaching and healing openly before the crowds of people gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths. The question of whether or not He is the Messiah is in the forefront of people's minds.

Some are already convinced that He is the Messiah (verse 31); others are not so sure (verse 26).

This passage has some really funny elements to it as the less educated crowds try to remember what they had learned in "Sabbath School" about the Messiah. Some were saying, "We know where Jesus is from (Nazareth in Galilee), but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where He is from" (verse 27). Another remembered that the prophets said the Messiah would be from Bethlehem. Since Jesus was from Galilee, how then could He be the Messiah (verses 41-42)?

What they didn't know was that Jesus had been born in Bethlehem but had spent the bulk of His life in Nazareth of Galilee. Amazingly, the prophets had also predicted this.

Look up Isaiah 9:1-7 and Micah 5:2-4.

Which prophet predicted the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem? _____

Which prophet predicted the Messiah would influence Galilee? _____

I wonder what Jesus' brothers were thinking as they heard the people talking! They knew that Jesus had been born in Bethlehem but had grown up in Galilee!

Verse 30 lets us know that the religious leaders were so upset at Jesus that they tried to arrest Him, but they could not because His hour had not yet come.

While on earth Jesus never used His power as God to benefit Himself. He used it to heal others and delay the time of His death so He could pour Himself and His teaching into His disciples.

When they tried to arrest Him, He would slip away to another place, or He would send a spirit of confusion on them so that they would be unable to carry out their sinister plans that would ultimately lead to them being responsible for His death.

Read verses 37-39 again.

These are key verses to understanding the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection.

On this day the High Priest would lead a procession down to a pool. He would then fill a pitcher of water and pour it out as a drink offering to the Lord.

I believe at the very moment the crowds were fixed on the High Priest, and he was about to pour the water out, Jesus shouted the words of verses 37-38! I believe everyone who was looking at the High Priest then turned and looked at Jesus! What a moment!

In verses 37-39, what does Jesus promise those who believe in Him will receive?

This is another of the great promises in John's gospel to those who believe. John 1:12 promised that those who receive Christ will become children of God. John 3:16 and other verses have promised that those who believe in Jesus will have eternal life. Here we see promised that those who believe in Jesus will receive the Holy Spirit.

Verse 39 is so important to understanding the Bible. It lets us know that after Jesus died and was resurrected from the dead and went back to Heaven, believers from then on would have the Spirit of God residing within them.

Now think about that for a moment. That means that in Old Testament days, the Spirit did not indwell believers permanently. A closer look at the Old Testament shows that in the days before Jesus' death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit did not permanently indwell believers.

In Old Testament days, the Holy Spirit would come upon a person, usually a leader, for a limited amount of time, and usually to complete a specific task. He helped the builders of the original Tabernacle back in the book of Exodus. He helped prophets deliver their messages. He helped kings rule their people.

The Bible makes clear that the Holy Spirit departed from King Saul after Saul's sin. Psalm 51 is King David's prayer of repentance after his sin with Bathsheba. He fears most of all that the Holy Spirit will be taken from him.

Some well-meaning Christians have concluded from Psalm 51 that believers in Christ can also have the Holy Spirit, and then have the Holy Spirit taken away. But Psalm 51 is part of the Old Testament. The word Testament is equal to the word Covenant. John is letting us know in verse 39 that when Jesus is glorified, believers after that time will be living in New Covenant, or New Testament, days. And one of the key differences in the two times will be that Jesus' death and resurrection will make it possible for the Holy Spirit to permanently indwell believers.

Write Ephesians 1:13-14 here:

As you pray today, thank God for the living water that flows within believers, the indwelling Spirit of God. Ask God to teach you more about the Holy Spirit's ministry in and through your life as we proceed through John's gospel.

Day 18- Read John 8:1-30

Verses 1-11 contain the much beloved account of Jesus showing compassion to the woman caught in adultery, and saying to her accusers, “let him who is without sin throw the first stone.”

The contrast between the love of God expressed through Jesus and the callous disregard for people shown by the Pharisees is clearly on display here.

The religious leaders had grown to take pride in their role as the judges of the people. Verse 6 makes clear they didn't really care about this lady as a person, but were using her unfortunate situation to try and entrap Jesus.

If Jesus had condoned her sin here, they would have said He rejects the law of Moses and was soft on sin. If Jesus had called for her condemnation here, it would have disheartened all the sinners who were looking to Him for hope of forgiveness of sins. Either way the Pharisees figured they would look better and Jesus would look worse.

It is intriguing to think what Jesus wrote on the ground that stopped them in their tracks. What do you think He wrote?

Some have suggested He wrote the names of some of them that had also committed adultery with her! We don't know, but we do know that He said, “let him who is without sin among you throw the first stone.” At that they one by one went away! No one was left but the woman and Jesus!

Think of it! The One who WAS without sin was left with the person who had been caught in sin. The only One whose judgment matters remained with her! He is the Final Judge we will all stand before (John 5:22). Jesus had sent the other would-be judges away, and was offering this lady forgiveness of her sin. I bet she took Him up on the offer. But lest we think Jesus is soft on sin, He calls her to go with a commitment to sin no more, as He had with the man in John 5:14. Believers sometimes lapse into sin, but they don't continue in a lifestyle of defiant sin!

I told you on Day 16 that two very meaningful celebrations had been added to the Feast of Booths. One was the water pouring ceremony initiated by the priest that served as a prayer for life-giving rain for the land. In John 7 we saw that Jesus took this opportunity to proclaim that He was the giver of living water, the Holy Spirit.

The second ceremony was the Temple lighting ceremony that filled the night sky with light. Every night in the Temple Complex Levites would climb up tall ladders and light huge torches, filling the darkness with light. I believe that last night of the Feast, as they were lighting those torches, is when Jesus cried out what is recorded in 8:12.

Write 8:12 here...

This is the second of the “I Am” statements that Jesus says in John’s gospel.

Just as Jesus is the Bread of life and the giver of Living Water, He is the Light of the World!

The Pharisees immediately challenge Him by saying His testimony is invalid because there are no other witnesses (verse 13).

I love how Jesus responds to them! Back in chapter 5 he had mentioned four witnesses to Himself: John the Baptist, miracles, prophecy, and God the Father. Here though, He challenges them by basically saying, “I know I Am God and I don’t need your approval. I know who I Am, and the Father is the only witness I really need!” Now here’s where they get really ugly.

They ask in verse 19, “Where is your father?” No doubt they had sent their private detectives to Nazareth to dig up any dirt they could on Jesus. No doubt someone there had said, “Joseph is not Jesus’ real dad – Mary was pregnant with Jesus before Joseph married her!” Of course we know about the virgin birth of Jesus that fulfilled Isaiah 7:14. But they didn’t know that, and in essence, they are saying that Jesus is “illegitimate” in verse 19. They say it again in verse 41.

Of course Jesus is speaking as God the Son about God the Father. There are some Old Testament verses that refer to God as the Father of Israel, but the average religious person at the time would not have spent much time talking about God as their own Father. And yet here is God the Son encouraging the idea of knowing God the Father personally, even as He does. This teaching was shaking the very foundations of what they had come to believe.

Look at verse 19 and answer...

True or False: If you come to know Jesus, you’ll know God the Father also.

Now look at verse 24.

The Greek words for “I Am he” are Ego Eimi, which should be translated as simply “I Am.” Jesus is stating that if you don’t believe that He is the I Am that Moses talked to at the burning bush, you will die in your sins. This is an explicit reference to Jesus being God and the terrible implications of denying who He is.

As you pray today, thank Jesus that He is the Great I Am. Tell Him again that you believe in Him and are so thankful for the eternal life He has given you.

Day 19- Read John 8:31-59

In this passage we get very helpful information on the true nature of belief in Jesus Christ.

Jesus makes clear in this passage that belief is more than mere intellectual assent.

What does verse 31 say that those who really are Jesus' disciples will do?

In John 5:24 Jesus had said that the one who believes has passed over from death to life.

In John 8:51 who is the one who Jesus says will never see death?

When we put these verses together we see that the one who has truly believed in Jesus and become His disciple will be characterized by abiding in His teaching and seeking to keep His Word. Obedience is not optional for a believer, but evidences that they are truly born again!

This is not to say that any true believer will be able to render perfect obedience before they get to Heaven. We all stumble in many ways, and apart from the Lord's grace and forgiveness based on His own faithfulness we'd be in big trouble. Thank God for I John 1:9...

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. -I John 1:9

What these verses in John make clear, however, is that anyone who claims to believe in Jesus but all they do is disobey Him is probably not really one of His disciples. Here's another one...

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven." -Matthew 7:21

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What does Jesus promise the one who believes in Him and holds to His teaching in verses 32 and 36?

I was born again on December 16th, 1984 as a senior in high school. The thing I felt in that moment is well characterized by the word "freedom!" No hardship I have encountered since as a Christian is as rough as when I was a "slave to sin."

Jesus words about freedom through following Him really angered those who didn't believe they were slaves to sin. They were trusting in their identity as Abraham's descendants and their own religious works to be alright before God.

They thought they were okay because Abraham was their “father.”

Who does Jesus say their father really is in verse 44?

WOW! Jesus wasn't afraid to “speak the truth in love,” was He?!

What are the characteristics of the Devil according to verse 44?

If we don't hold to the truth and live a lie, the Devil may be our father also!



The exchange over Abraham leads to another of Jesus' great I Am statements.

Write verse 58 here:

Correct grammar would have Jesus say, “Before Abe was, I was.” In saying “Before Abe was, I Am,” He is clearly saying that He is God. John the Baptist was born before Jesus, but claimed that Jesus was alive before him (John 1:30). In verse 56 Jesus says Abraham rejoiced to meet Him when he was alive!

There are several times in the book of Genesis that God met with Abraham. One of my favorites is Genesis 14:17-20, when Abraham met Melchizedek. Read it now!

What does Genesis 14:20 say that Abram gave Melchizedek after meeting Him?

A tithe is given to God, right? Melchizedek is called the King of Salem, which would later be called Jerusalem. He was also called the priest of God Most High.

Later in Psalm 110 the coming Messiah was called, “A priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

In the book of Hebrews the author takes several chapters and explains the significance of Melchizedek. He also says Melchizedek was “without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.” That's the kind of things John 1 says about Jesus! Abraham met Jesus, and so can we!

As you pray today, ask God to help your belief in Jesus to be characterized by abiding in His teaching and obeying Him. Confess any sins you haven't and claim His forgiveness!

Day 20- Read John 9:1-42

One of the greatest things about Jesus is the way He gives dignity to each person.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were known to have said, "God, thank you that I am not a dog, a gentile, or a woman!" That's not how Jesus thinks! We have seen Him show God's love to men and women, Samaritans, and Romans. I bet He was even kind to dogs!

In this passage we meet a man that society treated like a dog: a blind beggar. Jesus' disciples reflect the sentiment of the day when they ask in verse 2 whether it was his sin or his parents that had caused him to be physically blind.

Unfortunately, there are millions of people around the world that think the same way about people who are suffering: they must have done something to deserve it.

These days its hip for people to say they believe in karma, but karma basically teaches that you get what you deserve, either for actions in this life or a "past life." In those cultures where that is really believed, people don't usually help those who are suffering; they shun them.

But Jesus for all time defined the way Jesus would think about people in need.

Write verse 3 here:

What I love about that statement is that the miracle that follows doesn't need to happen for Jesus' words to be true. I have seen God get much glory from Christians who never get healed on earth yet inspire many people through their faith and perseverance.

Not surprisingly, when the man does get healed, the religious leaders don't celebrate but interrogate. They do everything they can to convince themselves and others that what Jesus had done was no big deal. They also decide to kick anybody out of the synagogue who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

Notice the progression of the blind man's understanding as he encounters Christ.

Beside each verse below, fill in the blank of what the man calls Jesus...

V. 11 A _____ called Jesus

V. 17 He is a _____

V. 38 _____

This formerly blind man was a man of “firsts.” Verse 34 tells us that this man was the first to be kicked out of the synagogue because of what he said about Jesus. Verse 38 goes on to tell us that the man who could now see worshipped Jesus. This is the first time in the gospel of John someone is said to have worshipped Jesus!

I love the interaction Jesus has with the Pharisees at the end of this chapter. In verse 39 Jesus says that He has come into the world so those who are blind will see, and those who think they see will be shown to be blind. At that they ask Him, “Are you saying we’re blind also?”

Jesus essentially says, “Since you think you can see you really are blind, and your guilt remains. But those who know they are spiritually blind will be made to see!”

True or False: The Blind man was the one with the biggest problem in chapter 9.

Do you catch the great turnaround in chapter 9?

At the beginning of the chapter, it looks like the blind man had the big problem. At the end of the chapter, we discover that the Pharisees had a much bigger problem than physical blindness: spiritual blindness! The answer above is False, because the Pharisees had the biggest problem!

The man they thought was blind was now able to see physically, and more importantly, spiritually. Those who in pride thought they could see had the real need, not the blind man!

As you pray today, ask God to help you follow His example and give a new sense of dignity to the people you come in contact with that often get treated poorly and overlooked in the world.

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found, was **blind but now I see!***

Day 21- Read John 10:1-10

Chapter 10 contains a couple more of the “I Am” statements of Jesus.

Let’s review the “I Am” statements we have seen so far.

Beside the statement write the verse it comes from (6:35; 8:12; 8:24; 8:58):

Statement:

Verse:

If you do not believe that I Am, you will die in your sins

I Am the Bread of Life

Before Abraham was, I Am

I Am the Light of the World

Now let’s add another “I Am” statement from Jesus. Write John 10:9 here:

This verse contains another promise, that the one who enters the “door” of Jesus will be saved.

What is a believer saved from? The built-in consequences of our sin nature and choices: separation from God, death, and Hell.

To understand a little more about this coming judgment believers are saved from, turn to Revelation 20:11-15. Now answer these questions:

According to Revelation 20:12, what kind of people will stand before the Great White Throne?

According to Revelation 20:15, who will NOT be thrown in the Lake of Fire at this judgment?

According to Revelation 20:13, how will those whose names are not written in the Book of Life be judged?

According to Revelation 20:14, what is another name for the Lake of Fire?

When a person trusts Christ, they are saved from this coming judgment. Having been born again, they will not face this second death. From this comes a memorable little statement:

If you are only born once, you will die twice. But if you are born twice, you'll only die once!

All sin is dealt with one of two places. For those who receive Christ, His death on the cross atoned for every sin they have or will commit. For those who reject Christ, they will be held accountable for their sins at the Great White Throne judgment and go to the Lake of Fire.

We must urge people to “settle out of court” now by believing in and receiving Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

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I love how Jesus compares Himself in these verses to a loving shepherd. In verses 3 and 4 He states that the Good Shepherd knows His sheep by name, and leads them out by going before them.

What does Jesus say true sheep do in verses 3 - 5?

The sheep _____ His voice.

The sheep _____ Him.

They will by no means follow a _____.

Look again at verse 8.

Jesus had just lovingly ministered to one of His “sheep,” the blind man who could now see both physically and spiritually. I wouldn’t be surprised if Jesus had his arm around the man who could now see as He rebukes the Pharisees.

They had been like thieves and robbers to the blind man, but He had been the Good Shepherd to the man who could now see!

Verse 10 gives yet another great promise to believers; write it here:

As you pray today, thank the Lord Jesus that He came to save us, to Shepherd us to abundant life! Commit yourself to listen to His voice and follow Him!

Day 22- Read John 10:11-21

Here is yet another of the great “I Am” statements of Jesus! Write verse 11 here:

In verses 11-14 Jesus follows up this great I Am statement by comparing the way of a loving shepherd with the way of a hired hand, or hireling.

Based on verses 11-14, beside the following statements write the word “shepherd” or “hireling” based on which better fits the statement:

Statement:	Shepherd OR Hireling?
Is doing the work for a paycheck	_____
Truly loves the sheep	_____
Will stay and protect the sheep when the wolf comes	_____
Will run away to protect self when the wolf is coming	_____
Knows the sheep personally, and they know Him	_____
Does not care for the sheep	_____
The sheep do not follow him	_____
The sheep listens to His voice and follow Him	_____
Lays down His life for the sheep	_____

One of the things I love about the word shepherd is that it is equivalent to the word Pastor. Psalm 23 says the Lord is My Shepherd, or Pastor.

All church pastors are merely imperfect under-shepherds serving Jesus the Chief Shepherd! Unfortunately, many times pastors act more like hirelings than good shepherds.

But not Jesus! Three different times (in verse 11, 15, and 17) He speaks of laying down His life for the sheep. That’s exactly what He is went on to do on the cross!

These words must have meant so much to His disciples after He rose from the dead and they finally got the full meaning of THE Good Shepherd laying down His life for the sheep!

Earlier we talked about how the gospels prove that Jesus is the rightful authority for the world. Verse 18 makes clear that Jesus has authority even over death.

Even though His life was going to be taken from Him at the cross, it was going to be a voluntary sacrifice on His part so He could be the perfect sacrifice for our sins, the Lamb of God.

And He clearly states here that He has the power to raise Himself from the dead!

It ain't bragging if you're God and can do it!

There are a couple of times in John's gospel that Jesus speaks of you and I believing in Him. Circle the verse in this section that speaks of you and I as believers:

- A. Verse 12
- B. Verse 14
- C. Verse 16
- D. Verse 18
- E. Verse 20

If you've listened to His voice, believed in Him and become a born again Christian, you are one of the other sheep He speaks about in verse sixteen. I bet you He had a picture of you and I in His mind when He said it! Oh how He loves you and me!

This reminds me of a story a fellow in our church told me. When he was a boy he had two sheep that he took care of and loved. And they loved him also. One night, though, a wild animal got in and seriously injured the sheep, so much so that they were going to have to be put down.

But something beautiful happened the next morning when Rod went to see his sheep and discovered they had been mutilated. When they looked up and saw the shepherd they loved, they both started wagging their tail, despite the pain they were in!

As you pray today, meditate on this question: Does Jesus still make your tail wag?

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*The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; **and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.***

-1 Peter 5:1-4

Day 23- Read John 10:22-41

Today’s passage shows Jesus back in Jerusalem for another feast. John’s gospel calls it the Feast of Dedication. We know it by another name, and it occurs around Christmas time.

What is the Jewish Festival celebrated around Christmas time?

- A. Passover
- B. Hanukkah
- C. Pentecost
- D. Tabernacles

The Hebrew word for Dedication is Hanukkah. The festival is not one of the ones mentioned in the Old Testament. It celebrates God’s work during the 400 years between when the Old Testament closes and the New Testament begins.

Its name comes from the rededication of the Temple after it had been desecrated by the Gentile ruler Antiochus Epiphanes. The Hanukkah story relates one of the greatest Jewish victories ever as they fought off foreign oppression in 165 B.C.

Verse two lets us know that Jesus was walking in the temple courts while this festival was being celebrated.

Earlier we learned that there were two sets of prophecy about the coming Messiah. One set of prophecies spoke of the Messiah as the Suffering Servant, while the other set referred to Him being a Conquering King who would throw off oppression and set up an earthly kingdom.

Because they were under Roman oppression, it was natural that they were more excited about the Messiah being their Conquering King than talk about Him suffering.

The feast celebrating their past deliverance made them wonder all the more if Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah who would deliver them in the present. In verse 24 they ask Him point blank if He is their Messiah.

Jesus responds by telling them that He has already said enough and done enough for them to have the answer to that question! Then He makes another statement in verse 26 referring to God’s initiative in human salvation. If they were His sheep, they would believe.

List 6 characteristics of true believers (Jesus’ “sheep”) given in verses 27-28:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Different Christian traditions argue about whether a person who has become a Christian can “jump out” of God’s hands. But the Bible makes clear that neither Satan nor anyone else can “snatch” true believers out of God’s hands! That is good news indeed!

I believe that because John and so many other scriptures talk about God’s initiative in salvation (often referred to as a mystery), when a person is truly born again they won’t “jump out” either. However, I do think there are lots of people who think they are born again but are deceived. The scriptures encourage us to “examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith” (2 Cor.13:5).

In verse 30 Jesus gives another explicit claim to being God. Write it here:

Based on verses 31-33, how can we be certain Jesus’ opponents understood He was claiming to be God?

As they tried to stone Him to death, Jesus slipped away from them. It was not yet His “time.”

Jesus wound up across the Jordan river in the place where John the Baptist had baptized in the “early days.” By this time, John the Baptist had been executed for confronting Herod about his adultery with his brother’s wife. I love what John 10:41 says.

Finish John 10:41 here:

“John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were _____.”

Many people then believed in Jesus because of John the Baptist’s testimony and Jesus’ own words and miracles.

In Matthew 11:11 Jesus pays tribute to John the Baptist by saying that no human who has ever lived was greater than John the Baptist.

What made John the Baptist so great?

Being a miracle worker? Nope, he never performed a miracle.

What made John the Baptist so great was that he made much of Jesus, courageously pointing others to Him! We should take comfort in that! You and I may never be as great as John the Baptist, but we can also courageously point others to Him wherever we are!

As you pray today, thank the Lord that as a believer no one can snatch you out of God’s hand! Commit yourself to pointing others to Jesus like John the Baptist did!

Day 24- Read John 11:1-57

This is the 7th of the 7 key miracles John includes in his gospel about Jesus.

Beside the verse below, write the other miracles that John's gospel includes:

2:1 _____

4:46 _____

5:1 _____

6:1 _____

6:16 _____

9:1 _____

In chapter 11, Jesus receives word that his friend Lazarus is very sick back in Bethany of Judea.

Jesus and His disciples had been in the home of Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary before (see Luke 10:38-42). Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus about Lazarus' illness, in hopes that He would come and heal him.

I love Jesus' statement in verse 4. Here's how the NIV version renders it: "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

Now you may be saying, "Wait a second! Lazarus does die! Isn't what Jesus says a contradiction with what follows?" No, it's more like one of the great paradoxes the Bible presents...

Lazarus' story will INVOLVE death, but not end in death! And by the end of the passage, we'll see that the same can be said for each of us who believe in Jesus!

One of the hardest things to learn as a believer in Jesus is to wait on Him when we think He should be hurrying up! Verses 5-6 are a case in point.

In verse 5 we are assured that Jesus loved this family. And then in verse 6 it turns right around and tells us Jesus stayed where He was two more days.

I can tell you as a Pastor when someone in my church has asked me to be at their family's side because a loved one is dying, they would not feel loved by me if I waited two more days to visit! The expectation is that I drop everything else and be there at their side. As a Pastor I never feel in those moments that I have to be there; I get to be there and want to be there!

When believers today don't feel Jesus' presence or don't have their prayer answered the way they want to or as soon as they want to, they often feel disillusioned with Jesus.

Even though Mary and Martha’s personalities were very different (See Luke 10:38-42), they both had the same response when Jesus got there and Lazarus had already died: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

What Mary and Martha didn’t know was that Jesus was about to demonstrate His love and power at the same time, and emphatically demonstrate that believers in Him will live after death!

Write down what Jesus tells Martha in verses 25-26:

Those verses are probably the most quoted verses (along with Psalm 23) at funerals. And for good reason! This is yet another of the great “I Am” statements of Jesus! He is the resurrection and the life! If we believe in Him, we’ll live even after we die!

You also need to answer the question He asked Martha, “Do you believe this?” Even in her grief, Martha testifies of her faith in Jesus, that He is the Messiah, the Son of God!

And see how He loved Lazarus! Verse 33 tells us that when Jesus saw their tears over the death of Lazarus, He was deeply moved in His spirit, and troubled, or angry, at how Satan’s temptation of Adam and Eve had brought death into the world.

Verse 35 is the shortest verse in the Bible. Write it here: _____

Many people that were there saw Jesus’ tears and understood how much Jesus cared! But in verse 37 others cynically said, “If He really cared, He would have kept this man from dying.”

Jesus must have thought, “Funny you guys should say that!” And then He who spoke the world into existence (Genesis 1) said, “Lazarus, come forth!” And Lazarus came back to life! WOW! What a miracle! Lazarus’ story had included death, but didn’t end in death!

So everyone believed in Jesus and they lived happily ever after, right?! Not exactly! Many did believe, but others ratted Jesus out to the religious leaders. Then in verses 49-50, their Chief Priest Caiaphas calls for the death of Jesus.

What Caiaphas didn’t know was that he was unwittingly prophesying that Jesus would be the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies like Isaiah 53:6...All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

As you pray today, thank Jesus for dying on the cross for our sins, bearing our punishment so that even though our story will probably include death, it won’t end in death!

Day 25- Read John 12:1-11

Chapter 12 brings us to the week of Christ's death on the cross for the sins of the world.

In the first 11 chapters, Jesus' words and deeds have been convincing proof that He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God.

His latest miracle, raising Lazarus from the dead, has been the catalyst for many more people believing in Him. In the next passage, crowds of people will welcome Him into Jerusalem as their Messiah. He will say in verse 23, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified."

We have seen that even though the Old Testament called for the Messiah to be both a Suffering Servant and a Conquering King, they had emphasized the Conquering King part and minimized the Suffering Servant part.

But in His own teaching Jesus has been preparing His disciples for the necessity of His death.

Write Matthew 16:21 here:

Unfortunately, Jesus' disciples were caught up in what their place of power might be when Jesus ruled as King from Jerusalem. The other gospels let us know that they were arguing about which ones were more deserving of higher positions in Jesus' government.

The disciples were busy thinking about their own interests when their dear Lord Jesus was facing His own death. It is with that background that we see how remarkable Mary's actions in this passage are!

In verse 2 we read that a party was held in Bethany in Jesus' honor. Matthew and Mark let us know the party was at the house of a man named Simon who had been healed of leprosy. Lazarus was also there, who had been dead and brought back to life!

Can you picture the joy in the room at what Jesus had done for each person?!

Our church experience is to be something like that party – each person sharing what Jesus has done in their life!

John's gospel reveals that Mary took a very expensive perfume, broke open the container it was in, and poured it on Jesus' feet.

Can you smell the perfume fill the entire room? It would have made everyone turn to see what was happening. They would have seen Mary wiping up the excess with her hair.

And then they would have heard Judas' snide comment criticizing Mary's act of worship. John lets us know that Judas was in serious sin at this point, stealing money that had been given for ministry purposes.

I have often seen this as a Pastor: people that are not right with God themselves criticizing how others worship.

I'm glad Jesus rebukes Judas in verse 7! And then Jesus commends Mary for her act of worship.

Fill in the blank from verse 7 that shows why Jesus commended Mary's act of faith:

"Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My _____."

Jesus commended Mary's act because it showed that she had been listening when He had been speaking about dying for the sins of the world. More than the disciples at this point, she understood the significance of His coming death and "anointed Him" for that purpose.

Mary was showing BEFORE Christ's death how valuable His substitutionary atonement for her sins was in her eyes; it meant eternal life for her, in fulfillment of His promise.

Jesus was so excited about this act of faith and worship that He then said this:

"Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." -Mark 14:9

What Mary got to do BEFORE Jesus died, we get to do regularly at church.

In what act of worship do we get to regularly demonstrate how much Christ's death means to us?

- A. The Lord's Supper
- B. Bible quizzing
- C. Potluck dinners

When we take the Lord's Supper, which is also called communion and the Eucharist by different churches, we get to thank Christ for His life-giving Death for our sins AFTER it happened. Mary did that BEFORE His death, and Jesus expressed His pleasure that she "got it."

The word Eucharist comes from the Greek and means "give thanks." As you pray today, give Jesus thanks for His life-giving death and resurrection.

Day 26- Read John 12:12-50

Think about two different kinds of animals for a moment: A workman's donkey, and a beautiful white thoroughbred horse.

Write the most likely one of those two animals to be used by the following type of person:

A conquering king _____

A servant with a job to do _____

In Revelation chapter 19 we read the following words about Jesus' Second Coming:

Now I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns...He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God...And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. -Rev. 19:11-16

I have read that after ancient battles, the victorious king would ride through the center of the defeated town on a white horse as people paid homage to him. The Bible teaches that Christ will do that when He comes to judge the world and reign forevermore. But in our passage for today, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, a beast of burden!

Do you see the significance? Before His Second Coming, when Christ will ride into Jerusalem on the white horse wearing many crowns, in His first coming He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to do the hard work of the Suffering Servant, dying on the cross for our sins.

In other words, the cross had to come before the crown!

Many in the crowds were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, but not familiar enough with all of the Old Testament prophecies to understand Jesus' talk about His death.

Verse 16 indicates that only in hind-sight did the disciples themselves understand, even though Jesus had already been getting them ready for His death and resurrection.

In verse 22, who do we see again facilitating people meeting Jesus? _____

That's the third time in John's gospel Andrew has brought people to Jesus. First he brought His brother Peter in chapter 1, then a child to Jesus in chapter 6, and now some Greeks. Hopefully you and I will have our own legacy of bringing different kinds of people to Jesus!

What does Jesus compare His own death to in verse 24?

When an apple seed goes into the ground and "dies," from it will grow an apple tree. Just as the seed going in the ground results in life, Jesus' death will give life to all who believe.

Don't miss that Jesus than calls believers to a type of death as well: death to self.

We are to love Christ so much that we become willing to endure any suffering that will come by being His disciple. Over the centuries, many believers have been faithful witnesses to Christ and even died for their faith rather than deny Him before people to save their own skin.

The word for witness in the Greek is the word martyr. Many times over the centuries Christians have given the ultimate witness by being killed for their faith. The word martyr came to be synonymous with being killed for the faith.

But "martyrdom" has often had the opposite effect of what persecutors intended: others see the martyr's willingness to die for the faith and are so impressed that they had something worth dying for that they became Christians themselves.

That's why Tertullian said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

Verse 26 is so beautiful! Fill in the missing blanks here:

If anyone serves Me let him _____ Me; and where I am, there My _____ will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will _____.

In verses 42-43 we see how relevant Jesus' words were then and now. The number of people that wanted to believe in and follow Jesus was growing, but they were afraid to identify with Jesus publicly for fear of what people might say and do to them.

Does that sound familiar? I have heard that about people in Muslim cultures that want to trust Christ but are afraid of what might happen in their village. I have also heard that from teenagers who are afraid of what people will think in their school.

But the bottom line is that Jesus died publicly on a cross for our sin debt, to set us free from Satan, sin, death, and Hell. And He calls us to follow Him publicly as well...

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in Heaven. -Matthew 10:32-33

Mark it down: Following Jesus always has and always will involve some level of trouble and suffering in this world. But having eternal life with Jesus is well worth it!

Verses 47-50 are staggering in their importance. In a very real sense Jesus won't even need to actively judge us at His Second Coming. We will be judged on what we have already done with Him and the words He has spoken.

As you pray today, ask God to give you a new boldness in proclaiming your love for Jesus among men. Thank Him for His life-giving death and resurrection. And be unashamed to present yourself to Him as His servant!

Day 27- Read John 13:1-20

Let's refresh ourselves about why John said he wrote this gospel. Write John 20:31 here:

John has taken the first 12 chapters and convincingly made the case that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that if a person believes in Him and receives Him they receive the gift of eternal life.

In what ways has John demonstrated that Jesus is the Messiah (circle all that apply):

1. The testimony of John the Baptist
2. The miracles Jesus had performed
3. The Great I Am statements of Jesus
4. Old Testament prophecies that gave information about the Messiah and matched Jesus
5. Jesus' statements about equality with the Father
6. The testimony of people from all walks of life who believed in Him

In all of those ways John has made a convincing argument that Jesus is the Messiah and must be believed and followed.

Chapter 13 begins a five-chapter interlude in the gospel of John that contains what has been called "the Upper Room Discourse."

We have seen Jesus over and over again say that "His time had not yet come." But verse 1 tells us that Jesus "knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father."

When chapter 18 begins, Jesus will quickly be arrested, experience several trials by the religious and Roman authorities, be crucified, buried, and rise from the dead.

Before those events unfold, Jesus spends chapters 13-17 with His disciples. Those chapters represent the evening they spent together before His arrest, when Jesus poured Himself and His teaching into His disciples.

Chapters 13-17 are incredibly important for us, because they contain the most basic expectations that Jesus has for us as His followers. The section finishes in chapter 17 with Jesus' actual prayer for disciples of all time!

In our passage for today, Jesus washes His disciple's feet.

The other gospels let us know that just before this Jesus had taken the Lord's Supper with His disciples. Then they began arguing about which one of them deserved the better positions when

Jesus became King in Jerusalem. Judas had also already secretly made a deal with the chief priests to betray Jesus (Luke 22).

I can tell you as a Pastor that when sinful pride (the disciples) and outright disobedience (Judas) like that are in a room, it sucks the spiritual life right out of the fellowship.

In the midst of these things, Jesus gives one of His most powerful lessons by washing His disciple's feet. Because they walked in sandals on dirt roads, an otherwise clean person would have filthy feet when they arrived at their destination. A good host would have servants ready to wash the feet of their guests.

For whatever reason that had not happened in the Upper Room! Perhaps the disciples were doing what church-goers often do: instead of focusing on their own selfishness, they may have been complaining about the lack of service by others. Imagine their surprise when Jesus, the only one there really worthy of being served, met the unmet need.

Fill in the blanks from verses 14-15:

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash _____
_____ 's feet. For I have given you an _____, that you should do as I
have done to you.

This goes so well with what Jesus said in Mark 10:45...

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. -Mark 10:45

In chapter 12 Jesus had talked about losing your life so you can find it. In washing His disciple's feet He gave a practical example of what that looks like in practice: seeking to meet unmet needs around you rather than looking to be served by others! If Jesus did it, we all are called to do it!

For each kind of person listed below, write a way you have seen them serve others:

A family member: _____

Someone at school: _____

A co-worker: _____

Let me point out that Jesus was secure enough to serve. He knew who He was in relationship to His Heavenly Father, and didn't care what others thought about being a servant.

As you pray today, ask God to make you secure enough because of your identity in Christ that you actually begin enjoying serving others for His name's sake!

Day 28- Read John 13:21-38

Today's passage starts with the sad story of Judas leaving the disciples.

Look up and write down Ephesians 4:27 here:

Now look up and write down 2 Corinthians 10:4 here:

As believers, it is important that our faith leads us to obey the teachings of the Bible in the power supplied by the Holy Spirit.

When we disobey in any area, we give the Devil a foothold. Picture an unwanted visitor at the door who puts his foot in the door before we can close it.

When we ignore the Holy Spirit speaking to our conscience about it and continue in the sin, we develop a hardened heart. Picture that unwanted visitor now being inside the house.

Continual disobedience without confession and repentance can lead to Satan having a stronghold in our lives. From there he will cause much damage to us and those we influence. Picture that unwanted visitor controlling your house and making you live in the closet.

Many disobedient believers have seen the following statement come true in their lives...

Sin will take you further than you wanted to go, keep you longer than you were willing to stay, and cost you more than you were willing to pay.

More than likely, Judas never really became a true believer. He had been around Jesus and His disciples, but more than likely was more interested in being part of a political takeover than a spiritual revolution.

When Jesus began talking about dying on a cross and suffering for the gospel, Judas was no longer interested. That gave the Devil a foothold. In chapter 12 we found out that Judas had been stealing the money used for ministry. That allowed Satan's influence to grow in his life.

Judas was critical of Mary for her act of worship in chapter 12. He did not repent when Jesus rebuked him, further hardening his heart. He then agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, and Satan's control over him was almost complete.

When Jesus confronts him in our passage for today, he again failed to repent. The Devil's foothold had become a stronghold. We'll pick up his sad story in chapter 18.

Friend, your story doesn't need to end the same way. Claim I John 1:9 now...

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. -I John 1:9

With Judas having left the room, Jesus begins the Upper Room Discourse.

Fill in the missing blanks from John 13:34-35...

A new _____ I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will _____ that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

The Old Testament repeatedly commanded love for God and for others. In what sense, then is Jesus command a new one. Meditate on that question and write a possible answer below...

Back in John 1:18 we read that Jesus has made the Father known.* Now that our God Jesus has come to earth, we will never have to ask, "What is God like?" He is like Jesus, because He is Jesus! A similar thing happens with Jesus' new command!

The key words in John 13:34 are "as I have loved you." We are commanded to love our fellow Christians as Jesus loved His disciples.

Throughout the gospels Jesus demonstrates how He commands us to love others. In the last passage we learned that Jesus "loved them to the end," and we saw Him meet their unmet needs by washing their feet.

It's very convicting when we read that this is how others will know we are truly disciples of Jesus, when they see how we love our fellow Christians.

So let me ask you a question: Would someone observing you for a couple of weeks identify you as a believer in Jesus based solely on how you treated other Christians?

As you pray today, ask the Father to help you love others as Jesus modeled for us!

*The Greek word for "make known" there is the same word we preachers get "exegesis" from. You might see traces of the word "exit" there. When we see an exit sign, we think of the word "out." When we exegete a Bible passage, we are not to read into it what we think, but to pull out of it what it says. Jesus has "exegeted" the Father for us; as God on earth Jesus made known to us what God in Heaven is like. We will never again have to ask, "What is God like?" He is like Jesus, because He IS Jesus!

Day 29- Read John 14:1-11

In the last passage Jesus made clear to His disciples that He would be leaving them soon (13:33). Unbelievers would not be able to join Him where He will be (13:33; 7:34). Believing disciples will get to join Him, but not until later (13:36).

Peter had challenged Jesus and stated that he would be willing to lay down his life rather than let something happen to Jesus (13:37). Jesus forthrightly told Peter that before the rooster crows (indicating the beginning of the very next day), Peter will have denied Jesus three times (13:38).

The disciples had spent the last three years travelling with Jesus. They were obviously greatly troubled as they tried to process Jesus' words about going away.

Try to picture yourself being one of those disciples in that room. List out some of the emotions you would have been feeling...

As Christians, some of the best lessons we learn are when we are feeling the kind of things the disciples were feeling. When we bring to Jesus our sadness, grief, confusion, and fear, He often teaches us wonderful new things.

In our verses for today, the disciples learn wonderful things about Jesus and Heaven that have ministered to believers for two thousand years now!

Beside the truth Jesus teaches here, write the verse number that truth is found in...

Truth:

Verse:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| Believers will be with Jesus in Heaven | _____ |
| Anyone who has seen Jesus has seen the Father | _____ |
| Jesus is the life | _____ |
| Jesus is preparing a place for us in Heaven | _____ |
| Jesus is the way to Heaven | _____ |
| To believe in Jesus is equal to believing in God | _____ |
| If you really know Jesus, you know the Father as well | _____ |
| Jesus is the truth | _____ |
| Jesus is coming back to get believers | _____ |
| Jesus is in the Father, and the Father is in Jesus | _____ |
| The only way to get to the Father in Heaven is through Jesus | _____ |

Verse 6 is another of the great I Am statements of Jesus! Write it here:

Some people believe and teach that there are multiple ways to Heaven. That's not what Jesus taught! He taught that He is the only way to Heaven. That's what His disciples also believed. This is what Peter preached in Acts 4:12 about Jesus...

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved. -Acts 4:12

When we realize how sinful we are before a holy God, we stop asking why there aren't more ways to Heaven and we start celebrating that there is a WAY to Heaven! A drowning man gladly accepts the life preserver thrown down to him from the ship and is saved; he does not continue to tread water and philosophize about other ways to be saved!

We have seen some wonderful promises in John's gospel so far! Here are a few...

John 1:12 told us that when we receive Jesus, we become children of God.

John 3:16 told us that when we believe in Jesus, we gain eternal life.

John 5:24 told us that when we believe in Jesus we will not be judged!

John 7:39 told us that when we believed in Jesus we would be indwelt by God the Holy Spirit.

John 8:12 told us that when we follow Jesus we would no longer walk in darkness.

John 10:28 told us that as one of Jesus' sheep no one can snatch us out of His hands!

What two promises are we now given in John 14:3?

Keith Green used to excitedly say, "Since it took 6 days to create the beauty of the world, but Christ has been working on Heaven for 2,000 years, this is like living in a garbage can compared to what's going on up there!"

As you pray today, thank Jesus for being the way to Heaven through His atoning sacrifice on the cross, for preparing Heaven for us, and that He's coming back to get us one day!

Day 30- Read John 14:12-31

John's gospel has shown us that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and when people believe in Him they gain eternal life and enter into a personal relationship with the living God. One of the ways John has done this is by showing the amazing things Jesus did for people.

That makes Jesus' statement in verse 12 all the more staggering! Fill in the blanks from verse 12:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he believes in Me, the _____ that I do he will do also; and _____ works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

Here's something neat: when Jesus says, "Most assuredly," in the Greek language it is the words "Amen, amen." We say amen when we agree with something the Pastor has preached.

It's almost like we are saying, "you can say that again!" By doubling the "amen" at the beginning of His statement, Jesus is underscoring what He is about to say. You can almost see the disciples looking up to make sure they heard well what He said next!

What are the two things Jesus than teaches them?

First, true believers will do the same kinds of works Jesus did when He was on earth.

What did Jesus do on earth?

Jesus shared God's truth on earth with individuals, small groups, and crowds of people He came into contact with. He also met people's urgent needs in a variety of ways. Most of us can't heal like Jesus did, but we can all use the resources God has given us to meet urgent needs.

Second, true believers will do greater works than Jesus did.

Now in John 15:5, we will see Jesus teach that in and of ourselves we can do nothing, but when we abide in Him we will bear much fruit. Christians also teach that the enabling power of the Holy Spirit is also behind any work done that bears fruit.

So what is Jesus saying here?

He is referring to the fact that in His time on earth, He didn't travel to the whole earth, and largely shunned the crowds to pour Himself into the 12 disciples and a number of committed followers that was around 120 people (the number of those praying together in Acts chapter 2).

The dramatic encounters He had with people that inspire us so much (like the woman at the well) all took place during a concentrated three years of ministry. Most of us get considerably longer to influence others for Jesus than just 3 years.

After He went back to Heaven, true believers would be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, and many of them would reach more people for Jesus than He had during His earthly days.

You don't have to look far to see this happen. Look up Acts 2:41.

How many people does Acts 2:41 say got saved and baptized after Peter preached? _____

Of course there is a corporate dimension of this as well. By that I mean what Christians do together for the Lord adding up and even multiplying! Researchers say that every hour around the world right now 3,000 people are saved! That's "greater works."

True to Jesus' words, His disciples have taken the gospel around the world, and met urgent needs as they did it. For instance, Christians built hospitals before anyone else was doing that.

Within these 3 chapters called the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus tells us many beautiful things about the Holy Spirit who will indwell believers.

Beside each thing taught below, write the verse it comes from in chapter 14:

He is the Spirit of Truth	_____
He teaches believers all things	_____
Believers know Him	_____
The world cannot accept Him	_____
He will be another Helper (like Jesus)	_____
He reminds of the things Jesus taught us	_____
He is sent by the Father in the name of Jesus	_____
He will be with believers forever	_____
He is within believers	_____
The world cannot see Him and does not know Him	_____

I am so thankful that when Jesus went back to Heaven He gave us the Holy Spirit to be within us as believers and to guide us to do the things Jesus would do if He was here!

Some cults take verse 28 out of context and say, "Jesus is not equal with the Father, because He said the Father is greater than He is."

This is what cults do: they magnify what one verse says to fit their false teaching and overlook what other passages say. Back in John 10:30, Jesus said, "The Father and I are One." In John 17:5, Jesus says, "and now, Father, glorify Me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

When Jesus says things like verse 28, "the Father is greater than I," He is talking about the time He came to earth and lived as a man.

As God the Son He was and is equal to the Father. As a man on earth He was voluntarily subject to God the Father in Heaven, modeling for us our own submission to God. The moment He returned to Heaven He reclaimed the eternal glory He had only voluntarily relinquished on earth!

As you pray today, thank Jesus that He is working in and through us to do greater works for His glory and the advancement of the good news about Him on earth!

Day 31- Read John 15:1-17

This passage says so many wonderful things about having a growing, fruit bearing relationship with the Lord!

Using the word bank below, fill in the blank with the best answer for each question...

1. According to verse 1, who is the true vine? _____
2. According to verse 5, who are the branches? _____
3. In verse 2, what does the Father do with a fruit-bearing branch? _____
4. According to verse 5, what can a branch do without Jesus? _____
5. In verse 8, what shows that we are really disciples? _____
6. In verse 2, what happens to branches that don't bear fruit? _____
7. In verse 5, what's the key to bearing fruit? _____
8. According to verse 8, who gets glory when we bear fruit? _____

Word Bank:

Bearing fruit	Believers	Taken away	Father
Jesus	Nothing	Prunes it	Abiding in Jesus

We should note that when Jesus says, "I am the True Vine," this is last of the 7 great "I Am" metaphors in the gospel of John.

When we abide in Jesus, we'll bear much fruit. Without Him we can do nothing that will last forever.

It is good to work hard and do things that help people and make the world a better place. But if we want to do things that last forever, we need to live in Jesus and do the things He says will make an eternal difference!

This leads us to a question. If abiding in Jesus is the key to making an eternal difference, how do we abide in Jesus?

The answer is given in verses 9-17. Fill in the blanks from verses 9, 10, 13 and 17...

As the Father loved me, I also have loved you; Abide in My _____. If you keep My _____, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His live....Greater love has no one than this, than to _____ one's life for his friends...These things I command you, that you love _____.

So how do we abide in Jesus?

Love Him and do what He says; love each other and lay down our lives for them.

When we think of greater love being expressed by laying down one's life, we think about Jesus dying on the cross for our sins.

But laying down your life involves more than being willing to die in another's place. It means moment by moment laying down what you could do for yourself for the good of another.

It is a student setting aside three hours to tutor someone else; It is a parent laying down hours at a time to help their child pursue an extracurricular activity; It is a neighbor canceling their days plans to help another neighbor clean up after a storm; It is a single mom working another job to help pay her child's tuition; It is a missionary giving up the best years of their lives here to take the gospel to an unreached people group. It is the friends of Jesus putting love for God first, and love for others before love for self.

In the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus promises that if you become this kind of person, you can rejoice in Him answering your prayers.

Look again at verse 7. If we abide in Jesus and His words abide in us, ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you. Back in 14:14, He said, "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it."

Unfortunately, some false teachers take verses like this and say, "If you ask for what you want, and tack on "In Jesus' name" to your prayers, He has to give you what you wanted. If He doesn't you didn't have enough faith." That's not what Jesus was communicating at all!

But what was He teaching?

Part of our problem in understanding is that we no longer live in the days of kings! In previous days, a king would send a messenger to someone "in his name" with a message. If I came to you and said I had a message from the king, I could not tell you what I wanted, but was under obligation to tell you what the king wanted. I was coming in his name, not my own.

Do you understand? When we ask for what we want and throw in "In Jesus' name," we haven't prayed in Jesus' name at all! We have really prayed in our own name!

To act in the King's name was to act according to what the king wanted. To pray in Jesus name is to pray according to what Jesus wants, according to what His will is!

So what is Jesus saying? When a person abides in Jesus and is committed to advancing His name for God's glory, they will wrap their prayer requests around what the King wants!

This will change the way we pray, and our response when God tells us no! We will pray more about the things that He has shown us He wants to happen on earth, and we will trust that when He answers our prayer requests "no" or "wait" it somehow serves to advance His will on earth.

As you pray today, ask God to help you abide in Him more fully than you have ever done before, and to bear much fruit through your "abiding" life!

Day 32- Read John 15:18-16:4

Let's review the 7 great I Am statements Jesus made.

Draw a line from the statement on the left to its verse reference on the right...

I Am the Resurrection and the Life	6:35, 41, 48, 51
I Am the True Vine	8:12
I Am the Door of the Sheep	10:7, 9
I Am the Light of the World	10:11, 14
I Am the Bread of Life	11:25
I Am the Good Shepherd	14:6
I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life	15:1, 5

In addition to those metaphors, Jesus explicitly stated in John 8:24 that “Unless you believe that I Am, you will die in your sins.” He was calling Himself the One Moses spoke to at the burning bush, the great I Am!

We also saw Jesus exclaim in John 7:38, “Whoever believes in Me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” In the next verse, John makes clear that Jesus was saying He is the giver of the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him.

In today's passage, Jesus tells us even more about how the Holy Spirit will minister within and through believers as they face hostility from an unbelieving world.

The passage starts with the sobering words that Jesus' disciples can expect people's response to them to be like their response to Jesus. In verse 20 He says, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”

As a Pastor I have seen this first-hand. Pastors tend to be lightning rods for people's thoughts about God. Many times I have seen Christians perk up at the news I was a Pastor, and even begin asking me questions from the Bible. I have also seen people that have rejected Christ until that point in their lives become agitated and even belligerent at discovering I was a Pastor.

Most of us have heard about the hostility new believers' face in countries where the majority of people are Muslims, or Hindus, or Communists. But for some time there has been an increasing hostility toward believers in the public square in America.

Even more than that, there was a time when Christians would be tolerated as long as they kept their message within their church walls. But now a growing number of hostile secularists in the West see it as their mission to ridicule and stomp out biblical faith completely.

They don't just want to keep us preaching in our churches away from the public square: they don't want us preaching our message at all! They have gone beyond merely rejecting our message: they call us delusional for believing it and dangerous for preaching it.

Deceived by Satan themselves, they take aim at Christ and Christians alike. The good news for believers is that Jesus told us to expect hostility from those who reject Him.

Fortunately, we are not alone as we testify about Jesus. Fill in the blanks of verses 26-27 here...

But when the _____ comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of _____ who proceeds from the Father, He will _____ of me. And you also will _____. **-John 15:26-27a**

Tomorrow we will see more of how the Spirit bears witness to the world. Today we simply want to reinforce that the Spirit will help us testify, or witness about Jesus, even when it's hard.

The word translated Helper is the Greek word Paraclete. It means "one who comes alongside." In the little letter of I John, it is used of what Jesus does for us...

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an ADVOCATE with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. **-I John 2:1-2**

Back in John 14:16 Jesus said He would send another Helper (Advocate) to live in true disciples – the Spirit of Truth. So just as Jesus came alongside true believers in salvation, the Holy Spirit comes alongside believers as they live for Jesus and witness in His name!

For 2,000 years as Christians have witnessed to others in the power of the Holy Spirit, others have also become Christians. Some of them were hostile to the messenger before they became Christians, but then became great witnesses themselves, like the apostle Paul.

Revelation 5:9 promises that as a result of the witness of believers through the power of the Holy Spirit, there will be someone from every people group on earth in Heaven...

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." **-Revelation 5:9**

As you pray today, ask God to help you be faithful to Him even amidst persecution from others. Commit to rely fully on the power of the Holy Spirit as you witness in Jesus' name!

Day 33- Read John 16:5-15

John's gospel has taught us such amazing things!

Let's take a little quiz to recap what we have learned.

1. What are people promised in John 1:12 they will become if they receive Jesus?

- A. That they will have eternal life
- B. Indwelled by the Holy Spirit
- C. Children of God
- D. Forgiven of sin

2. What did Jesus say in Jn 8:24 would happen to people who did not believe He is "I Am?"

- A. They will die in their sins
- B. They will perish from the earth
- C. They will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire
- D. They will never have the Holy Spirit within them

3. What does Jesus say is true of His sheep in John 10:28?

- A. They will have eternal life and no one can snatch them out of Jesus' hand
- B. They will be forgiven of their sin
- C. They will become children of God
- D. They will experience life to the full

4. What does John 14:6 say is true about Jesus?

- A. He sends the Holy Spirit to live indwell believers
- B. No one comes to the Father except through Him
- C. There is no other name written under Heaven by which people can be saved
- D. He is the Creator of all

Every statement above is true, but the specific correct answer from the verses referred to are: 1=C 2=A 3=A 4=B

John chapters 14-16 have been called the Upper Room Discourse (even though part of that time it appears they were walking toward the garden). In today's passage Jesus continues to teach His disciples about the Holy Spirit.

Jesus makes an amazing statement in verse 7. Fill in the blanks of that verse here:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your _____ that I go away, for if I do not go away; for if I do not go away, the _____ will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

Jesus told them they would actually be better off without Him physically present with them because they would have the Holy Spirit spiritually present within them!

Sometimes I wish I could have lived in the days of Jesus and travelled around with Him during the three years of His public ministry. I would love to have heard His voice as He taught. I would love to have seen Him work miracles and the joy people experienced as He healed them. Wouldn't that be the best? NOT according to Jesus!

According to Jesus, we actually have an advantage over those who walked with Jesus! He could not be physically present with them all over the world. But wherever we are, if we are a believer God the Holy Spirit is inside of us. And one day we will see Jesus and be with Him forever!

In verse 8, Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit will convict the world!

According to Jesus in verse 8, what are the three areas the Holy Spirit is always "convicting" the world about?

S _____ R _____ J _____

As you witness to people, you can count on the fact that you will never talk to anyone who the Holy Spirit has not already been impressing about these three areas.

Whenever I really have an in-depth conversation with people, most freely acknowledge they have sinned and that something just isn't right about their lives, and they fear death and what happens after death.

Interestingly, in verse 9 Jesus makes the greatest sin not believing in Him!

Back in chapter 3 we learned that because of sin people are already condemned. Because of God's love for sinners, Jesus came to bear the punishment due their sins on the cross.

The person who believes in Jesus will be forgiven of sin and have eternal life. Therefore to not believe in Jesus is really the only sin that will keep a person headed for judgment. In rejecting the only way to be saved, a person continues to drown in their sin.

All sin gets dealt with, either on the cross or at the great white throne judgment. For believers, their sin was taken care of at the cross of Christ. For those who reject Christ, the wrath of God remains on them (John 3:36) and their judgment will be eternity in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15).

He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for man to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. –Heb. 9:26b-28

As you pray today, thank Jesus for decisively dealing with our sin on the cross. Also thank Him for the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth and reminds us of what Jesus taught us as we live for Him!

Day 34- Read John 16:16-33

Let's recap what Jesus teaches about the Holy Spirit in chapters 14 through 16.

Beside the statement below, write the verse it comes from in the "verse bank" below...

Statement:

He will glorify Jesus _____

He is the Spirit of Truth _____

He will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment _____

He will bear witness about Jesus _____

He will be sent to believers by the Father in the name of Jesus _____

He will actually be inside believers _____

He will guide believers into all the truth _____

He will teach believers all things _____

He will remind believers of the things Jesus taught them _____

He will be the believers Helper who is with them forever _____

Verse Bank (You will need to use a couple of them more than once):

14:16 14:17 14:26 15:26 16:8 16:13 16:14

Today's passage is the last part of the Upper Room Discourse before Jesus' wonderful prayer in chapter 17. It is evident that the disciples still do not understand what Jesus is saying to them.

These words will mean much more to them later, when Jesus rises from the dead and commissions them to take the good news to all peoples.

I am thankful John records these words for believers of all time, including you and me.

Throughout the centuries since Jesus went back to Heaven, believers have faced difficult times and circumstances.

These words give great comfort and direction as we face tough times. Jesus never promised believers easy going in their life; what He promised was His peace and presence within us as we live as citizens of Heaven in a sin-stained world.

Write 16:33 here:

Unfortunately, many false teachers rip Bible verses out of their context and claim that if you pray the right prayer or have enough faith, you will stay healthy and have only good things happen to you. This has been called the health and wealth gospel by some, the prosperity gospel by others.

Christians who believe those false teachings are then disillusioned when their health fails, their car breaks down, the bills are hard to pay, and they experience some level of persecution from those who don't believe in Jesus.

I am so glad that Jesus was honest with us and told us that we will have trouble in this world, but can experience His peace and joy now despite those troubles! And then we get to go be forever with Him in the place He is preparing for us!

In verses 20-22 Jesus uses an analogy most families can relate to: how the anguish a woman feels just before giving birth to a healthy child is replaced by sheer joy when the baby comes!

I was present for the birth of all three of my children, and one of the pictures permanently in my mind is the ear to ear smile Elizabeth had when holding each of our newborn children!

In a similar way, when we are in Heaven with Jesus, seeing His face and being with Him will make any anguish we had in this life be forgotten in an instant!

Later the apostle Paul wrote this...

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. -2 Corinthians 4:16-18

As you pray today, thank God that this life is not all there is. Ask Him to help you faithfully serve Him no matter what comes in this life, knowing eternal life with Him awaits!

Day 35- Read John 17:1-26

Matthew 6:9-13 is often referred to as the Lord's Prayer. In response to the disciples asking Jesus how to pray, He said, "this is how you should pray..."

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

If Matthew 6 is Jesus' model prayer for us, John 17 shows the Lord's actual prayer for us. There are so many meaningful things in Jesus' words here!

Many times we bow our heads and close our eyes when we pray. But the main thing about prayer is the prayer, not the posture. In verse one, Jesus actually looked toward Heaven and prayed. Maybe the next time you pray with others you should say, "Lift up your heads and open your eyes!"

Many times we view having eternal life as making a decision for Christ that will mean we get to go to Heaven instead of Hell.

That is part of it, but what does Jesus say the essence of eternal life is in verse 3?

Pastors like me often talk about cultivating a personal relationship with God. That's what Jesus says here is the main thing about eternal life: knowing the Father, knowing Jesus! When we think about Heaven, we need to be as excited about the Person we'll be with there as the Place!

Verses 3-5 are another set of those verses that talk about Jesus as the eternal God who stepped into time.

Any time we talk about Jesus as fully God and fully man, and what happened during those 33 years He spent on earth, words quickly fail us!

Some cults read verse 3 and say, "see there, Jesus is not the true God."

But in chapter 1 John made clear in several ways that Jesus is God the Creator who has always existed. And in 17:5 Jesus looks forward to going back to Heaven and sharing again the glory He had always had with the Father!

Therefore verse 3 can't be taken to mean that Jesus is not God, but must be understood in the way we understand all the verses where Jesus is seen deferring to the Father.

In other words, during His time on earth, He voluntarily emptied Himself of His right to express His divine power and glory at all times. He carefully selected the times He expressed His divine power and glory, but most of the time as a man modeled submission to the Father.

Perhaps a chart will help:

Eternity Past:

Father, Son and Spirit
are the eternally
glorious God!

33 Years on earth:

Jesus models submission
to God as a man, selectively
using His divine power

Eternity Future:

Father, Son and Spirit
are the eternally
glorious God!

John 17:15 goes along with what we learned in 16:33. Write 17:15 here:

When I was a young Christian, men used to jokingly say to me, “You’re staying out of trouble, aren’t you?” That never sat too well with me, because Jesus made it clear that one way or another, we all are going to have trouble in the world.

Some people get into trouble for stupid, sinful reasons. Others have trouble because of the sins of others toward them. Sometimes trouble comes just because of how Adam and Eve’s original sin brought troubling consequences into the world.

Christians have trouble for all of those reasons, but other times simply because they are being faithful to God’s call on their lives and others don’t like it!

Knowing this made me change my response to those people over the years. I now say, “I’m not trying to stay out of trouble; I’m trying to get in trouble for the right reasons!” Jesus wants us to make a difference in the world, so His prayer for us is that we’ll be protected from the power of Satan as we engage the world. Don’t try to stay out of trouble: get in trouble for Jesus!

Do you know that Jesus prays for you and me in John 17?

Check out verse 20. For 2,000 years Christians have been witnessing to people that needed Jesus, who then believed because of their message. That means that on the night before He was crucified, Jesus prayed for you and me! He prayed we would have complete unity in our desire to glorify Him and make Him known. He said when we concentrate on Him, the world will be more inclined to believe our message!

As you pray today, ask God to answer Jesus’ prayer in your life: that you will be united across denominations in mind, heart, and will with those who desire to know Christ and make Him known.

Day 36- Read John 18:1-27

In John 20:31 John tells us why he wrote the gospel of John. Write that verse again here:

There are three main sections within the gospel of John.

Chapters 1 to 12 are compelling proofs of John's statement in 20:31.

In those chapters John offers many compelling proofs that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and believing in Jesus brings eternal life to the believer. These proofs include:

- The testimony of John the Baptist and others about Jesus.
- The miracles Jesus was doing
- The fulfillment by Jesus of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah
- Jesus' equality with the Father

Chapters 13 to 17 cover Jesus' time with His disciples the night before His arrest.

Within those chapters He pours into them the basic things He expects of them. Those expectations include:

- They should consider themselves servants who wash one another's feet.
- They should love one another as He has loved them
- They should rejoice that He is going to prepare a place for them
- They should rely on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit who will indwell them
- They should abide in their relationship with Christ and obey His commands
- They should lay down their lives out of love for Christ and others
- They should be completely united with one another as they reach out within the world

Chapters 18-21 cover Jesus' arrest, trials, crucifixion, death, resurrection, and commissioning of His disciples. His resurrection will dramatically confirm that He is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believers have eternal life in Him!

You may remember that in chapter 13 Judas departed to betray Jesus and Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him three times before the next morning. Chapter 18 picks up with those things happening.

Verses two and three let us know that Judas led a mob out to arrest Jesus.

Judas knew where Jesus would be: in a garden that Jesus had often met with His disciples in.

The garden had been a safe place for the disciples: a place they had spent time in prayer and fellowship. Now the safety of that place was shattered, and it included the betrayal of someone close to them.

If you have ever had your own safe place shattered by the actions of another, know that John and the other disciples can relate.

But also know this: Jesus' powerful presence can even be felt when bad things are happening.

Look at verse 6: when Jesus said, "I Am," those who were going to arrest Him drew back and fell to the ground. They had come to arrest Him, but would not have been able to without Jesus' help! In verse 8, Jesus actually gives them permission to get up and arrest Him!

Jesus was in control that day, and Jesus is in control today! We can trust in His powerful presence, even when we don't understand the circumstances around us!

As the arrest unfolds, Peter goes from being willing to fight to the death for Jesus (verse 10), to denying Jesus three times (verse 27). So Judas had betrayed Jesus and Peter had denied Jesus.

As a Pastor I have seen false Christians do what Judas did, and real Christians do what Peter did. At the time, it's hard to know who is a Judas and who is a Peter.

It's what happens after the betrayal/ denial of Jesus that shows whether someone is really saved or not!

After the betrayal, Judas ran away from the Lord and other disciples. He had remorse but not repentance, and later took his own life.

After the denial, Peter later ran towards the Lord and was still with his fellow disciples. His repentance led Him to receive Christ's forgiveness and to restoration.

As you pray today, ask God to make you like Peter instead of Judas. Ask God to forgive you for what you have done, and run to Jesus and His church.

Day 37- Read John 18:28-19:16

Today we look at the trials that Jesus underwent.

John doesn't have a lot to say about the religious trials that Jesus underwent.

In our last passage he tells us that Annas sent Jesus on to Caiaphas the High Priest.

Annas had been the High Priest before being removed by Rome. Caiaphas was his son-in-law. Some of Annas' sons also held the post of High Priest over the years. Caiaphas was the official High Priest, but in the eyes of the people, Annas was the real High Priest.

Annas wanted Jesus to die. After his unofficial interrogation of Jesus, Annas sent Jesus on to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jewish nation. Caiaphas had already said that Jesus should die (John 11:49-53).

The Sanhedrin illegally met in the middle of the night and agreed with Annas and Caiaphas to bring their charges against Jesus to the Roman authorities. Being under Roman rule, they could not execute Jesus.

Had Jesus been killed by the Jewish authorities, He would have been stoned to death like the Old Testament law called for. Rome executed criminals through the horrible death of crucifixion.

According to John 18:28-29, the religious rulers brought Jesus to the Roman governor of Judea, Pilate. It was very early in the morning. Pilate, probably irritated at being woken up so early, asked them what their charges against Jesus were.

John 18:30 would be very funny if it wasn't so disturbing. They basically want Pilate to "trust them" that Jesus deserves death.

The charge they had found Jesus guilty of was blasphemy: claiming to be God. That was punishable by death for the Jews, but not for the Romans. So as they talk to Pilate, they insist Jesus is guilty of treason against Rome and Caesar by claiming to be Israel's true king.

Treason was punishable by death in Rome. What they did not know was that all of this was also going to fulfill Old Testament prophecies (18:32).

Write Zechariah 12:10 here:

Pilate and Jesus have two intriguing interactions as he tries to figure out what is going on.

When Jesus presses Pilate about testifying to the truth, Pilate sneers, “What is truth?”

Pilate was like a lot of people today.

To Pilate truth was a product that is always changing. For believers in Jesus, Truth is a Person who never changes.

To Pilate, “truth” was what the most powerful man at the moment said; To Pilate, “truth” was the slave of what the majority demanded or what the situation called for.

For people today, truth is not viewed from the lens that says, “God is the measure of all things,” but one that says, “Man is the measure of all things.”

If we were to ask which man is the measure, the answer would be, “whichever man you are talking to.” That’s why you hear nonsense like, “That’s true for you, but not for me!” OR this one: “You live out your truth, and I’ll live out my truth.”

Jesus was pressing Pilate to understand that there are timeless truths; truth is unalterable, fixed, and objective. Truth is as reliable as the God who has revealed it in His creation, His Word, and in the person of Jesus.

Pilate was so impressed with Jesus that he says 3 different times in our passage that he finds no basis for charging Jesus with a crime. Write down those verse numbers here:

Verse _____ Verse _____ Verse _____

Pilate does everything he can to try to not be responsible for Jesus’ death. Another gospel shows him trying to pass Jesus on to the governor of Galilee, Herod Antipas. In John 18:39 he tries to trade Jesus’ freedom for the execution of a murderous rebel. He hopes giving Jesus a brutal whipping will be enough in John 19:4. He offers to let them execute Jesus in 19:6.

Nothing worked. Exasperated, Pilate went back in and confronted Jesus. He pleaded with Jesus to give Him a reason not to have Him executed. Jesus didn’t defend Himself. Pilate says in 19:10, “don’t you realize I have the authority to have you killed.”

Just as we saw in the last passage that Jesus had to let Himself be arrested, here we see Jesus insist that the authority of Heaven that He represents is greater than that of Pilate.

Fill in the blank from 19:11 here:

Jesus answered, “You could have no _____ at all against Me unless it had been given you from _____.”

Verse 13 lets us know that Pilate sat on the judgment seat.

He didn't want to have Jesus crucified. He knew Jesus was innocent, but was too cowardly to deny the mob. He didn't want to lose his political position by having another complaint filed with Caesar by the religious rulers. And so he sent an innocent man to His death.

Another gospel lets us know that as he did so, Pilate washed his hands and claimed that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus. Several years after this Pilate was removed from his office anyway. Tradition says that within a decade of having Jesus crucified he committed suicide.

Sitting in judgment of Jesus doesn't work, whether it was Pilate then or an unbeliever now, for...

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” -2 Corinthians 5:10

“So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.” -Romans 14:12

As you pray today, apologize to God for the times you have called him before your “judgment seat” and passed judgment on Him. Acknowledge any sin before Him, and ask Him to forgive you and help you to live humbly by faith in Jesus, knowing He is God and you are not!

If you have never prayed to receive Jesus, pray this prayer now to the Lord:

“Dear God, I know that I am a sinner, and I know my sins deserve judgment. Thank you that you have not left me in that hopeless condition, but you came to earth, Jesus, and lived the perfect life I fall short of. That made you a legitimate substitute for my sins. Thank you that your love made you willing to be an atoning sacrifice for my sins. I believe you died on the cross as my sin substitute, then rose from the dead to show your power over Satan, sin, death, and Hell. I believe, and I receive you as my Savior and pledge to follow you as my Lord. In the days ahead, show me what that means. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen”.

Day 38- Read John 19:17-42

Today we look at the crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus.

It's important to remember that even though the religious and political rulers were humanly responsible for Jesus' death, Jesus willingly offered Himself to save people from the consequences of their sin.

Beside the statement below, write which verse it is from the verse bank below:

God so loved the world that He GAVE His Son, so believers would not perish _____

The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all _____

Jesus said, "I lay down My life for the sheep." _____

The Messiah will be wounded for our transgressions _____

John the Baptist: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" _____

The Messiah will bear their iniquities _____

Verse Bank:

John 1:29 Isaiah 53:5

John 3:16 Isaiah 53:6

John 10:15 Isaiah 53:11

What love Jesus has for us! He died a brutal death so our sins could be forgiven!

John 20:17-18 tell us that Jesus was crucified at the place of the Skull.

The Hebrew word for place of the skull is Golgotha. What is the Latin word for Golgotha?

- A. Danville
- B. Ringgold
- C. Yanceyville
- D. Calvary (Calvaria)

We've got some great songs about Jesus dying at Calvary for our sins. Maybe you will end up writing one that has Golgotha in it! The Greek word that appears only in Luke 23:33 is kranion!

Something very interesting happens in verses 19-22.

Pilate has "The King of the Jews" written above Jesus' head. He has it written in Aramaic, which was the religious language, close to Hebrew. He had it written in Latin, which was the political language of the day. He also had it written in Greek, which was the cultural language of the day.

Jesus is Lord of every dimension of our lives!

Here's the interesting part: criminals would have their charges written over their heads. Passersby would see "murderer" or "thief" or "rapist" written over the criminal's heads, and agree that they deserved to die.

But there was no charge over Jesus' head, just the fact that He was the King of the Jews! That caused the religious officials to complain to Pilate that he should change the sign to say that Jesus merely claimed to be the King of the Jews! But Pilate wouldn't budge!

We already know the greater reason Jesus didn't have a real charge against Him that day: He was bearing our sin on that cross. It is as if the charge due you and I, "Hell-bound sinner," was written over His head. Write out 2 Corinthians 5:21 here:

"When Jesus says, "It is finished" in verse 30, He means His atonement for our sin. He had done everything it would take for a believer in Him to go to Heaven instead of Hell.

That's why another gospel reveals that He also said, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" while hanging on the cross (Mark 15:34). At that moment Jesus was bearing our sin, and the Father looked down and saw not His dear Son but our sin.

Jesus felt in that moment the reality of how sin separates us from God in Heaven. Then, having born the wrath due our sins in His body, He said, "It is finished."

The Greek word for "It is finished," *tetelestai*, could be rendered as "Paid in full." When an account had been settled in those days, the word was written in big letters over the receipt!

Jesus had finished doing His work of atonement for our sins. When we believe in Him we are forgiven of those sins and gain eternal life!

I love the fact that after His death, verses 38-39 tell us that Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus bury Jesus' body. They were both members of the ruling council. Luke 23:50-51 tells us that Joseph had not been consenting to Jesus' death.

Perhaps Joseph and Nicodemus had both left the Sanhedrin's sham trial of Jesus in the middle of the night and found each other. Jesus' death had the opposite effect on them that the other religious leaders intended. After seeing Jesus die, Joseph and Nicodemus were finally willing to step forth and be known as Jesus' disciples! Jesus had died publicly for them, and they would now live publicly for Him, no matter the cost.

As you pray today, thank Jesus for dying on the cross for your sins!

Day 39- Read John 20:1-31

Today we look at the beautiful truth that the grave could not hold Jesus: He is alive!

That doesn't surprise those of us who have been reading the gospel of John, because Jesus told us back in John 10:17-18 that He had the power to lay His life down, and the power to take it back up again!

But for those first disciples living then, they didn't believe it until they saw Him alive with their own eyes! And when they saw Him alive from the dead, it changed them forever from hiding out in fear to going forth in faith!

Mary Magdalene was a key witness of the Lord's resurrection.

What three "firsts" are attributed to Mary Magdalene from the following verses:

Verse 1: The first one to _____

Verses 14-16: The first one to _____

Verse 17: The first one to _____

WOW! By God's grace Mary Magdalene was the first one to discover the empty tomb, the first one to see Jesus alive from the dead, and the first one to "go and tell" others the good news!

Luke 8:2 tells us that Mary Magdalene had had 7 demons cast out of her by Jesus. Since that deliverance, she had been one of the many women following Jesus and the disciples from place to place as they ministered.

I really get angry at the preposterous and wicked accusations made by people like Dan Brown today that Mary Magdalene must have had some sort of sexual relationship with Jesus. Sinful people have trouble relating to strong spiritual women, and do everything to tear them down.

The beautiful story of Mary Magdalene, however, survives any attempt to make it other than it was. She was used of God despite her painful past to get the good news that Jesus was alive to the other disciples.

Sometimes people say that Jesus didn't really rise from the dead, but His disciples just made that up. But men writing in that day would not have made themselves look so bad and a woman look so good. They reported that Mary Magdalene was the first to see Jesus alive because it was true!

Mary Magdalene remains an inspiration to both Christian women and men today. Christians are proud of the amazing things women have done for Christ over the years. And non-Christians often make the same remark one Roman official made 1800 years ago, "What remarkable women these Christians have!"

You have to read the rest of the New Testament to discover all of the wonderful ramifications for believers that Jesus is alive. But one of them is in verse 17.

Jesus tells Mary to go to His brothers. Previously they have been referred to as disciples and friends, now He calls them family!

The resurrection of Jesus means now believers can call God Father and each other brothers and sisters. Jesus is our older brother, the first one of us to rise from the dead!

Verse 19 lets us know that later that same Sunday night Jesus appeared to His disciples, who were overjoyed to see Him. Fill in the blanks from verses 21-23 here:

So Jesus said to them again, “_____ to you. As the Father has sent Me, I also _____ you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the _____. If you _____ the sins of any, they are forgiven them.”

Where there had been fear, knowing Jesus was alive brought peace. They had been hiding out, but they were now being sent out! They would have two powerful aids as they witnessed to others: the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the power of forgiveness.

Back in John 7:38-39, Jesus had promised them they would receive the Holy Spirit. Now that day has come. An even greater empowerment for service would come on the day of Pentecost.

Why is forgiveness so powerful?

Because people usually have a certain way they react when they are sinned against. When you have done something bad to me, I want to react by doing something back to you.

When a Spirit-filled believer reacts to people with forgiveness it makes them wonder why the Christian is doing that. It also impresses others looking on. The Holy Spirit uses that “testimony of forgiveness” to make non-Christians want the peace the Christian has.

Now Thomas missed the appearance of Jesus that night. He couldn't believe Jesus was alive, and said, “I won't believe it until I see Him and put my fingers where the nails were!” A week later Jesus shows up and lets Thomas do that, proving He was no ghost but the Resurrected Lord!

Write down what Thomas calls Jesus in verse 28 here:

I love verse 29, because Jesus is speaking a blessing over you and me today if we believe in Him. “Thomas,” He says, “you believe because you saw, but blessed are the ones who have not seen and yet believed!”

Jesus is my best friend even though I haven't seen Him with my eyes yet! I hope you can say the same thing! As you pray today, say to Jesus, "You are MY Lord and MY God!"

If you have never prayed to receive Jesus, pray this prayer now to the Lord:

"Dear God, I know that I am a sinner, and I know my sins deserve judgment. Thank you that you have not left me in that hopeless condition, but you came to earth, Jesus, and lived the perfect life I fall short of. That made you a legitimate substitute for my sins. Thank you that your love made you willing to be an atoning sacrifice for my sins. I believe you died on the cross as my sin substitute, then rose from the dead to show your power over Satan, sin, death, and Hell. I believe, and I receive you as my Savior and pledge to follow you as my Lord. In the days ahead, show me what that means. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen".

Day 40- Read John 21:1-25

Of the four gospels, it's interesting that this touching chapter about Jesus' restoration of Peter occurs in the gospel of John. Most scholars believe that Peter was Mark's main source for the gospel of Mark. Yet it is not until the last gospel written, John, that we get this great story.

My guess is that John wrote his gospel after the Roman Emperor Nero had killed Peter in Rome. Nero had Peter crucified on an upside down cross. I think chapter 21 is a tribute of sorts to his departed friend Peter.

We said a couple of days ago that after he betrayed Jesus, Judas had fled from the Lord and his fellow disciples. He had remorse for his actions but did not repent.

We see something completely different in Peter's response after he denied Jesus. After he denied Jesus, the next time we see Peter he was with his fellow disciples after Jesus was crucified. When Mary Magdalene reported that the tomb was empty, Peter and John ran to the tomb.

If you have sinned, how do you know the difference between just being remorseful like Judas and truly being repentant like Peter?

A repentant person does what Peter did: instead of running from Jesus and fellow believers, they run to their fellow believers and to Jesus.

As they were waiting to hear from Jesus again in Galilee, Peter and the other disciples did what they knew to do: they went fishing. Suddenly Jesus was with them, and they caught a huge amount of fish and then had a fish fry!

Maybe they were reminded of his words to them in Mark 1:17. Write it here:

I love Jesus' conversation with Peter in John 21:15-17.

Peter had denied he knew Jesus three times before people. Now Jesus gives him three opportunities to affirm that he loved Him! It is a touching time of restoration!

Something interesting happens in the Greek language. The first two times Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him, He uses the strongest word for love, Agape. When Peter responds that he loves Jesus, he uses the softer word for love, Phileo.

Peter had failed Jesus so much when he denied Jesus, he couldn't bring himself to use the stronger word. Gone was the bragging he had done in his previous days, replaced by humility.

I love what happens next! When Jesus asks Peter the third time, “Do you love Me,” He uses the word Phileo. In other words, Jesus met Peter right where He was, and restored him!

When we cry out to Jesus in humility, He still meets us right where we are!

But let’s not miss what Jesus says 3 times that true believers will do if they really love Him. Fill in the empty blanks from verses 15-17...

“ _____ My lambs.”

“ _____ My sheep.”

“ _____ My sheep.”

Don’t miss this point: If we truly love Jesus, we will care the way He does for people.

These days many Christians love the analogy of being fishers of men, but forget that the Lord’s call was also for us to be shepherds of His sheep. Think about that for a moment!

Write down several ways that being a shepherd is harder to do than being a fisherman...

One thing that pops into my mind is that with fishing, you catch them and then you eat them. You can do it for just part of the day and then you are done. You don’t really develop a personal relationship with fish.

But being a shepherd is a much more demanding commitment, involving a 24/7 commitment. Good shepherds are involved enough to know their sheep by name and the strengths and weaknesses of each one. They take care of their sheep and protect them until they die.

That was what Jesus was calling Peter and John to and the rest of us as well! For Peter it would involve doing what Jesus Himself had done: dying on a cross.

But the question is not whether or not we will die for Jesus, which is beyond our control. The question is whether we will believe in Jesus and live for Him, following Him into all that He has for our lives whatever comes!

As you pray today, say to Jesus these words: “Lord Jesus, I believe in You, and I will follow you no matter what. I will commit my life to fishing for people and feeding your sheep.”